

No. 28

PRICE 5 CENTS

MY QUEEN



AN INTERRUPTED WEDDING
OR MARION MARLOWE AS MAID OF HONOR
BY GRACE SHIRLEY

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Here Is Health

53 Leading St., Cleveland, O.,
Oct. 7, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—I am pleased to inform you that your Remedies have completely cured me. I was troubled with weak lungs and chest, and I also had catarrh. I *know* the Slocum System is the best in the world, and I will recommend your medicine to all who may be in need of Remedies of their character.

Yours truly,
HARRY L. LYON.

McComh, Pike Co., Miss.,
Oct. 2, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—I write to let you know that your Remedies have entirely cured my little girl of scrofula and I feel very thankful to you for all your kindness.

Yours respectfully,
MALISIA ADISON.

Wesson, Copiah Co., Miss.,
Oct. 4, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—In reply to your kind letter I wish to say that since taking your Remedies I am sound as a dollar. I believe had it not been for your medicine I would now be in my grave. I feel very thankful to you for the cure that was performed in my case, and beg to remain,

Yours sincerely,
CHAS. VAN NORDEN

Woodland, St. Joseph Co.,
Oct. 9, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—My little boy had catarrh in the head very badly. When he was five years old I saw your medicine advertised and tried it and he now is entirely cured. I can highly recommend your medicine to anyone.

Yours respectfully,
MRS. ASA TABER

Grove Park, Alachua Co., Fla.,
Oct. 12, 1900.

Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—I received your letter, also the Remedies that you sent at my request and I hope you will pardon my long delay in writing to you to commend your good medicine. The pain in my throat has vanished and I am feeling a great deal stronger than before. I will recommend your Remedies to all in my town who are suffering from consumption or any disorder of the throat, chest and lungs. Thanking you very kindly for what you have done for me, I remain,

Yours respectfully,
M. T. BOUKER

Green, Connecticut, N. Y.,
Oct. 12, 1900.

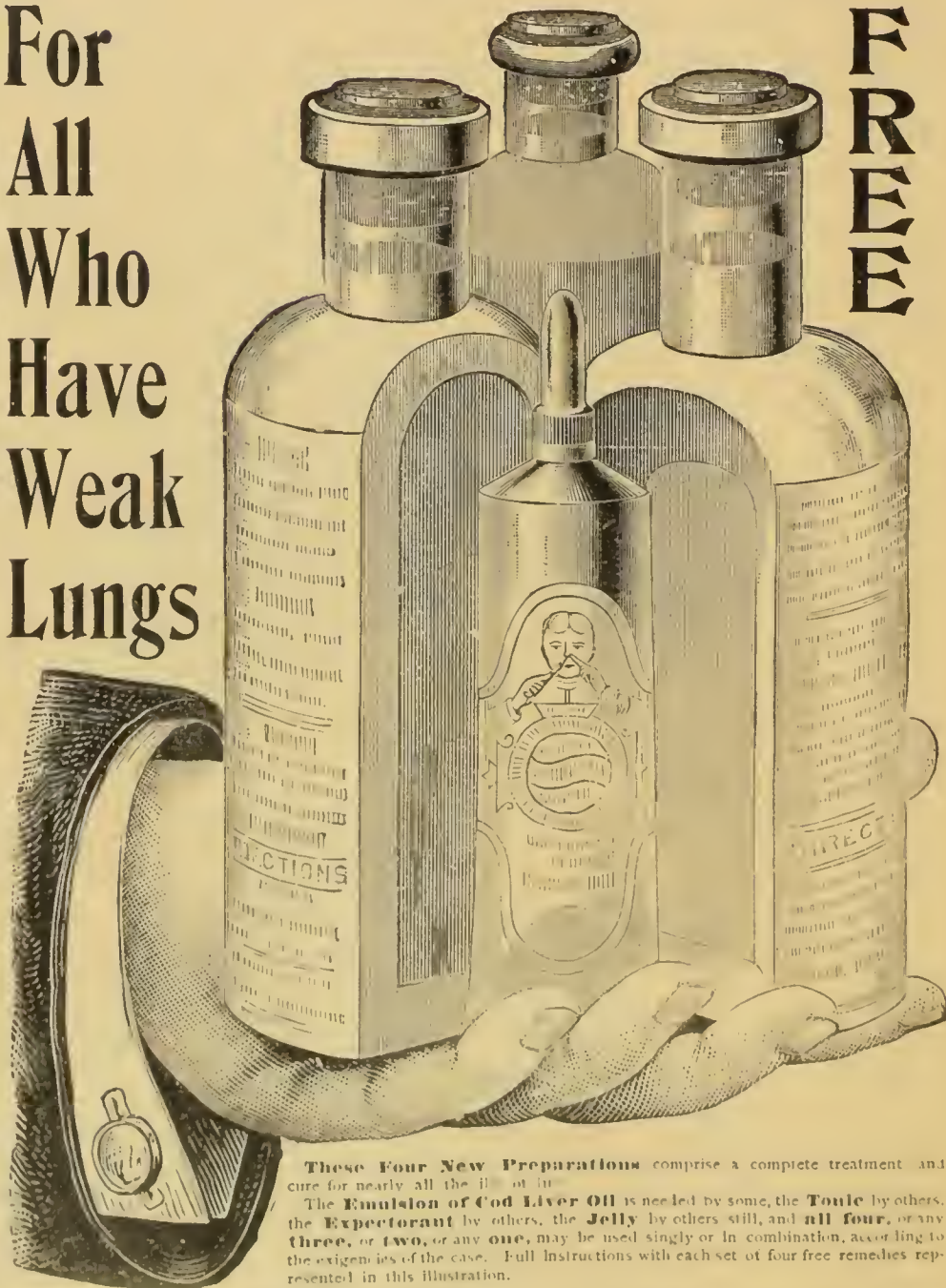
Dr. T. A. SLOCUM,

Dear Sir:—The cough which has troubled me for long time is entirely cured, and I owe my restoration to your wonderful Remedies. I am writing to thank you very much for what I feel very thankful to you, and I will recommend your Remedies to all.

Yours respectfully,
CHAS. H. DAVLING

For
All
Who
Have
Weak
Lungs

FREE



These Four New Preparations comprise a complete treatment and cure for nearly all the ill of the

The Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil is needed by some, the Tonic by others, the Expecto-rant by others, the Jelly by others still, and all four, or any three, or two, or any one, may be used singly or in combination, according to the exigencies of the case. Full instructions with each set of four free remedies represented in this illustration.

THESE FOUR REMEDIES

Represent a New system of treatment for the cure of consumption and those suffering from wasting diseases, weak lungs, coughs, sore throat, catarrh, bronchitis and other pulmonary troubles, or inflammatory conditions of nose, throat and lungs.

The treatment is free. You have only to write to obtain it.

By the New system devised by DR. T. A. SLOCUM, the great specialist in pulmonary and kindred diseases, the needs of the sick body are supplied by the FOUR distinct remedies constituting his Special Treatment, known as the Slocum System.

Whatever your disease, one or more of these four remedies will be of wonderful benefit and will cure you. According to the needs of your case fully explained in the Treatise given free with the free remedies. The ailments of women and delicate children are speedily relieved.

The four remedies form a bulwark of strength against disease in whatever shape it may attack you.

They Cure.

THE FREE TRIAL.

To obtain these four FREE preparations that have never yet failed to cure all you have to do is to write, mentioning My QUOTE to DR. T. A. SLOCUM, 98 Pine Street, New York, giving full address. The four free remedies will then be sent you at once.

MY QUEEN

A WEEKLY JOURNAL FOR YOUNG WOMEN

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An Interrupted Wedding;

OR,

MARION MARLOWE AS MAID OF HONOR.

By GRACE SHIRLEY.

CHAPTER I.

MARION'S REMARKABLE BEHAVIOR.

It was Easter Monday and Marion Marlowe was seated by the window in her sister Dollie's cozy little parlor gazing wistfully out upon the muddy sidewalks.

Suddenly she sprang to her feet and gave a cry of delight which brought Dollie to her side in the space of a second.

"Oh, Dollie! Here is Bert! I was so afraid he wouldn't get here and I did so want him to be at the wedding!"

Dollie craned her pretty neck to look down at the hansom cab which had stopped before the door, and was just in time to see Bert Jackson as he sprang from the vehicle.

"Alma would have been so disappointed if he hadn't come!" she answered, happily, "and, of course, she must not be disappoint-

ed on her wedding day! That would be a dreadful beginning, wouldn't it, sister?"

Marion wound her arm about her twin sister's waist and bent her head until it rested upon Dollie's plump shoulder.

"It would, indeed," she said, almost sadly; then much to Dollie's amazement, she burst out crying.

"Why, Marion Marlowe! What ever is the matter?" cried Dollie, in alarm, as she removed her sister's arm so she could turn and stare at her.

Marion sank into a chair and put her handkerchief to her eyes, while her graceful form shook with sobs.

"You must tell me," went on Dollie, more decidedly. "Why, Marion. I never saw you cry like that before! It is usually poor little me that does the crying! Do please tell me, darling, what it is that distresses you!"

"I'm sure I don't know what it is, or I

don't know exactly," murmured Marion, just as a vigorous peal of the bell spoke eloquently of Bert's impatience.

"Do go, Dollie, and let him in! I'll be over this in a minute! I guess I am only crying because Alma is going to be married and because, well, because she is so very, very happy!"

Dollie stared for a minute as if she could hardly believe her ears, then she burst out in positive indignation:

"Why, Marion Marlowe! What an awful thing to say!" she said, sternly. "The very idea of your begrudging Alma her happiness! Why shouldn't she be happy, I'd like to know, when she is going to be married!"

"You don't understand, dearie," said Marion, brokenly, "and I really don't see how you could! I don't understand myself, only I know I am miserable! I do so want to be happy myself and I can't be, Dollie!"

The handkerchief went up to her eyes again, but this time a light was breaking over Dollie's features. What she might have said was interrupted by another furious ringing of the bell, and the young wife departed instantly toward the direction of the kitchen.

"Dear me, he'll break that bell wire if I don't hurry," she whispered, as she began punching the door opener. "Bert is always so impatient, but I suppose I ought to take that as a compliment. He says I have the dearest little home in the world, and he is always in a hurry to get here."

Marion was forgotten for a minute as Bert came bounding up the stairs, then Dollie drew him out into the kitchen and held up one finger warningly.

"Don't say a word, Bert, until I tell you something," she whispered, mysteriously. "What do you think—our Marion is in the parlor this minute almost crying her eyes out, and all because that blessed girl Alma is going to be married and happy!"

"Great Scott! Fairy tales!" was the young man's astonished reply, as he put his arm around Dollie and hugged her enthusiastically.

"If I believed that. Dollie, I'd go out and kick the bucket! Life wouldn't be worth living, for I'd be sure she had gone crazy!"

Dollie pursed up her lips and shook her comely head, solemnly.

"It's a fact, just the same," she whispered, in the same cautious tone. "She told me so herself not a minute ago. Now, what in the world do you suppose is the matter with her?"

She stared at him earnestly as she asked the question, and Bert returned the glance with curious gravity.

"Maybe she is coming down with la grippe," he said, in a thoughtful manner. "People are liable to say anything when they are afflicted with that malady. What other symptoms have you discovered, Dollie?"

The young girl's pretty nose was tilted in lofty disdain as she answered:

"Pooh! What an abominable guess! Why, Marion isn't sick a mite! If she was threatened with the grip she would be sneezing, wouldn't she? Well, Marion never sneezed in her life that I can remember!"

"Remarkable girl!" murmured Bert, with a glance toward the parlor. "Suppose we go in and have a look at her, Dollie."

"Oh, you always want to leave me and go to Marion," laughed Dollie, good-naturedly, but the serious look had not left her face for a moment.

"Not a bit of it! On the contrary, the more the merrier!" was Bert's answer. "So come on Mrs. Moore, let's visit the parlor together."

As Bert spoke, he suddenly raised Dollie from the ground, and, tucking her under his arm, started for the parlor.

Dollie wriggled and squealed, but it was all of no avail. Bert was as strong as a young giant; she could not get away from him.

"Oh, Bert! If Ralph should see you he would be dreadfully angry," she gasped.

"Well, he won't see me," was the reply, as Bert strode on. "I don't do this sort of thing when a lady's husband is around! I have too much respect for my own safety, and don't you forget it."

"Bert, I'll tell you something if you let me down," gurgled Dollie, again. "It is something about Marion, and you'd be glad to know it."

Bert dropped her like a flash just outside the parlor door and, in a second, Dollie rose on tiptoe and whispered, softly:

"Marion is crying, Bert, and it is because of Alma's wedding, too, but I know exactly why she is doing it. Marion is falling in love and she doesn't know it, and she is actually envying Miss Allyn her happiness!"

Bert gave a low whistle of actual surprise, then he turned on his heel and started back toward the kitchen.

"Oh, Bert! where are you going?" called Dollie, in astonishment.

Bert looked over his shoulder and lowered his voice as he answered:

"I'm going out to telephone to Dr. Brookes. If Marion is really weeping, it is his golden opportunity."

"But I don't know that it is the doctor," began Dollie, nervously.

"In which respect I have the advantage of Mrs. Moore," was Bert's answer, "for I happen to know that it is the doctor!"

There was a rustle in the parlor, and Marion opened the door. She was not weeping now, but was laughing merrily.

"Oh, Bert! I'm so glad to see you!" she cried, gayly. "I've had a fit of the blues over Alma's marriage. I guess it is because I

love her so much that I am positively jealous of Mr. Fairfax."

"Then you ain't in love, after all," blurted out Bert, gloomily. "Well, all I have to say is that you are a curious girl, Marion, but Gee! I nearly forgot what I came for, Dollie. Alma wishes me to tell you that the devil has broken loose and she cannot possibly accept your invitation to dinner."

There was a gasp from Dollie, and Marion's face grew pale with emotion, for, in spite of Bert's flippant words, they could both see that he was in earnest.

"Oh! what can have happened?" cried Marion, and just then Bert succeeded in extracting a letter from one of his inside pockets.

"I haven't the remotest idea what has broken, but I guess this will explain," he said, handing the letter to Marion. "I saw Alma an hour ago and she looked like a spook instead of a girl who is to be married to-morrow."

Marion seized the letter and tore it open hastily, then read the contents aloud to her companions.

CHAPTER II.

MISS ALLYN'S SECRET.

An hour after breaking the seal of her friend's letter, Marion was hurrying downtown in a cab to call upon her.

Miss Allyn was stopping at a quiet hotel and, as the young girl tapped upon her door, she cautiously admitted her.

"Oh, Alma! What is it?" were Marion's first words. She had taken one glimpse at her friend's face and knew she was suffering.

"Take off your hat, dearie, and make yourself comfortable," was Alma's only reply. "I knew you would come, but, honestly, Marion, I hoped you wouldn't. I just don't feel that I have any right to bother you with my troubles."

Marion tossed her hat upon the table and then laid her hands determinedly upon Miss Allyn's shoulders, almost forcing her friend to look at her squarely.

"Alma Allyn, you ought to be ashamed to make such a remark to me," she said, soberly. "Aren't we sisters, I'd like to know, so why shouldn't you tell me! Why, I tell you everything, Alma! You know I do, don't you?"

Miss Allyn turned her face away, and the tears began trickling through her lashes. She could not answer for a minute, so Marion went on more softly:

"I think it is just dreadful, Alma, that you should have any troubles upon the very eve of your wedding day, but you must tell me one thing, if you do not tell me any more—is anything wrong with Mr. Fairfax? Has he disappointed or deceived you?"

She whispered the last half of her question almost in terror. The thought was too horrible for her to express it without shuddering. But another glance at Alma's face relieved her immediately, for a flush of pride and joy spread over Alma's pale features.

"No, indeed, dearie! Henry has not disappointed me the least mite in the world! He is the dearest, truest fellow that ever lived, but, oh! Marion, I believe I would be happier if he didn't love me!"

Her composure had given way at last, and she was sobbing on Marion's shoulder, while the young girl grew momentarily more distressed and excited.

"Sit down, Alma, and try to tell me all about it," she said, soothingly.

"Something awful must have happened, or you would not feel like that, and it is right that I should share your secret with you."

"Oh, if it were only a secret!" wailed Miss Allyn, as she sank upon the sofa with her head still upon Marion's shoulder.

"If I could only have kept it a secret! I have tried so hard, but it has been utterly impossible!"

A perfect storm of sobs followed the broken statement, and Marion's heart almost broke with pain as she suffered in sympathy.

Alma was the nearest and dearest friend she had in the world, and she loved her almost as much as she did her sister Dollie.

She had left her only the day before fairly radiant with happiness over her coming marriage, and now she was convulsed with grief—she could not understand it.

But Miss Allyn was a brave girl, and, after a moment of bitter sobbing, she managed to stifle her grief and at last she raised her head from Marion's shoulder.

"I ought to have told you months ago, dearie," she said, brokenly, "and, oh, how I blame myself for not telling Henry! But you know, don't you, Marion, that there are some things that one simply cannot tell, not even to the friends who would be only too glad to help you bear them."

Marion nodded her head and drew her friend a little closer, then she took one of Alma's hands and held it tightly.

"It was a family secret before mamma died," went on Alma, after a minute, "and since her death there has been no one but me to keep it! Oh, Marion! Just think what it must be to have a skeleton in the closet! A disgrace which one must be forever concealing!"

She rose as she spoke and began pacing the floor, while a flush of shame mantled her very forehead.

Marion stared at her mutely; she could not speak. Not for an instant could she imagine what her friend was about to tell her.

As Alma moved swiftly across the room, some one touched the door on the outside and, for a minute, Marion was amazed to see her friend stop abruptly and begin trembling all over.

"It was only one of the maids," she whispered, almost involuntarily. "You are dreadfully nervous, Alma! You must see a doctor."

Miss Allyn locked her fingers together and resumed her pacing. She was trying to nerve herself to tell the rest of her story.

"Yes, I tried to keep it, Marion," she continued, more bitterly. "but, as strange as it may seem, there was some one who would not keep it. She gloried in it, almost, and I am absolutely helpless! Can you imagine any one glorying in their own dishonor, Marion?"

She turned as she spoke, and asked the question sharply, but as Marion was about to reply some one shook the door noisily.

There was another instant of trembling and a deeper flush mounted to Miss Allyn's brow; then, with a decided movement, she went to the door and opened it.

"This will save me the agony of telling you my secret, Marion," she said, bitterly, "but I would have given my life almost to have kept you from meeting her, though the fact remains that she is my sister."

Marion rose to her feet almost paralyzed with amazement, then, as a flashily dressed young girl entered the room, she stood staring at her like one in a dream.

It took but an instant to see the family resemblance between the two girls, but beyond a similarity of features the likeness ended, for the newcomer was painted and powdered and her hair was bleached to a tow color, while her garments were evidently chosen to attract attention.

"This is my sister, Gladys Allyn," said the bitter voice again. "Will you speak to her, Marion, just because you love me! I would not ask you for any other reason."

Marion nerved herself to take a step forward, but as she did so and extended her hand a coarse voice greeted her.

"Hello! So you are the paragon that I've heard so much about, are you? Well, I must confess that you are a beaut, all right, but what the deuce is the matter with you and Alma? I've had a snifter or two, but that doesn't shock you, does it?"

She lurched heavily across the room as she spoke and literally fell into a chair, while Alma closed the door and bolted it securely.

"Well, what do you think of her, Marion?" asked Alma, in a softer voice. "She is only twenty-two and yet you can see what she is. She was born a lady—now she is only a——"

Her voice gave way, but the intoxicated girl finished the sentence for her.

"A lush, Miss Marlowe! An out and out lush! That is what Al wanted to say, but the word stuck in her gullet."

She drew herself up unsteadily and leered at Marion a moment, then broke out into a noisy song that echoed painfully through the room.

Marion's arm stole around Alma's waist, but she was collecting her wits gradually. There was something pitiful to her in this hideous spectacle.

"What shall I do with her, Marion?" asked Alma, pathetically. "I have not seen her in a year; in fact, I did not know that she was living until she appeared last evening. Now she comes to me from the slums and as drunk as a Bowery loafer, and she comes on the very eve of my wedding."

There was a world of agony in the girl's face, and Marion knew her too well to misunderstand her. She had done what she could to reform her sister. The task was hopeless and she was driven to desperation.

"I think I can help you, Alma," was Marion's low answer. "She is your sister, so, of course, she must be cared for and protected, and I would not be your friend if I did not help you!"

"You dear, brave girl!" murmured Miss Allyn, brokenly; then she raised one hand and pointed to her sister, whose head had fallen back upon the chair in a drunken stupor.

"Oh, why couldn't she have been like you?" she cried, in agony. "Why couldn't she have been a good girl instead of a bad one?"

Marion shuddered and her lips grew pale as she answered:

"We don't know why, and there is no need to ask, Alma. The only thing for us to do is to make the best of it. We must do all in our power to effect a reformation."

"As if I hadn't exhausted the recipes," murmured her friend, sadly.

"Then it is my turn, Alma! I shall take her in hand! And I shall save her, too, Alma, if for no other reason than because we both love her!"

Miss Allyn's lips quivered, but there was a stony look in her eyes as she replied:

"Yes, I love her, Marion, in spite of her sins, but oh, how I do hate that villain who wronged her! Honestly, Marion, I commit murder in my thoughts whenever I think of him! I never saw him nor heard who he was, but my anger will pursue him to the end of my life! I cannot die until I see that wretched monster punished!"

Her face was blazing with indignation and her form was trembling, and Marion tried her best to quiet and soothe her, but she sympathized so deeply that she could not rebuke her anger.

"It is just as I felt once," she murmured, sadly. "But dear Dollie is safe and I am, oh, so thankful! We will save Gladys, too, Alma. We just must save her!"

CHAPTER III.

IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE.

When Marion finally left her friend's apartment, Gladys Allyn was still dozing in

the easy chair, but Alma was feeling more hopeful and encouraged.

Marion had shared her sorrow so nobly that she could not help feeling relieved, and the young girl had already thought of a way of benefiting her sister.

Marion walked thoughtfully along the street for several blocks, then she suddenly came to a standstill upon a corner and a rosy flush spread over her features.

A young man was coming toward her with a quick, graceful stride, and, in another moment, he was shaking hands with her.

"Oh, Dr. Brookes, I am so glad to see you!" she exclaimed, brightly. "And you could not have appeared at a better time, for, as usual, I am in a lot of trouble and I wish you to help me!"

In an instant the young man's handsome face clouded, but he only held her hand a little closer.

"Let us take this car and go around to the office, then," he said, quickly. "We can't talk here, and I can see that your message is important. You were flushed when I saw you and now you are as pale as death, Marion."

He gazed at her eagerly as he spoke, and once more the telltale flush mounted to her brow and her white eyelids drooped tremulously.

"I guess I was glad to see you," she managed to stammer. "That was what made me flush, but here comes our car! I am glad you suggested my going to the office."

The doctor looked at her sharply as he assisted her into the car, for there was something unnatural in the fair girl's manner.

For just a second his heart had beaten wildly with hope, but as he seated himself at her side he was schooling himself not to show his emotion.

It was only now and then that he allowed himself to think that Marion cared for him, but the look of pleasure upon her face when

she saw him always made his blood thrill with delight, for he could never quite despair of her some day loving him.

As soon as they reached the office Marion seated herself by the open fire, for, although the day was pleasant, she felt uncomfortably chilly.

"I guess it is from what I have just seen and heard," she said, faintly. "for oh, Dr. Brookes, something awful has happened! I am so glad that Alma gave me her consent that I should tell you!"

Dr. Brookes seated himself at her side with a look of consternation on his features. He was more than distressed over Marion's nervous condition.

"Is it possible that there is anything wrong with Fairfax?" were his first words. "Why, he has always seemed to me to be the soul of honor! Tell me quickly—has he backed down or deceived her, Marion?"

He leaned toward her as he spoke, and the young girl smiled back at him happily.

"That was the very first question I asked Alma, and oh, how quickly she resented it! No, there is nothing wrong with Alma's lover, doctor; she says he is the dearest, truest fellow in the world," was the merry answer.

"And did you agree with her, Marion?" asked the doctor, softly.

Marion let her eyes wander over the shining fireplace as she answered:

"Dear me! You wouldn't have had me contradict her, would you? Why, even in her grief I don't know what Alma would have done! Called me an unappreciative mortal, no doubt, and then cut my acquaintance."

"Alma isn't so foolish as all that," said the young man, smiling. "Mr. Fairfax may be 'dearest and truest' to her, but not to you, Marion. You are entitled to a 'dearest and

truest' of your own; yet, for some reason or other, you don't seem to want one."

Once more the young girl's face was the color of roses. Instinctively she knew that the doctor was very near the verge of again referring to his love, so she began in a hysterical way to tell him of what had happened.

"Just think of it, doctor," she exclaimed, as she concluded her story. "Gladys ran away from her home at the age of fourteen, and oh, what a life she did lead Alma for a time! Why, the dear girl has rescued her from fearful places, but Gladys did not seem to care about being respectable! She just goes back into bad company in spite of everything."

"A degenerate, I guess," said the young physician, thoughtfully. He was intensely interested in the dreadful story.

"I hardly think that, but she certainly is incorrigible," answered Marion, sighing. "It seems to be a case of artificial depravity. She could not come by it naturally in such a lovely family."

"I would like to know her history," went on the young physician. "Young girls can't become depraved all by themselves."

There was a look of disgust upon his manly features, and as Marion glanced at him she burst out impetuously:

"Oh, Reginald! Why is it that all men are not like you?"

The name slipped from her lips like a note of music; then Marion leaned a little forward and her breath came faster.

Dr. Brookes rose from his chair and hurriedly crossed the apartment. His name upon her lips had set his every pulse to vibrating.

"Why cannot all men be upright, honorable and just," she went on, rapidly, "instead of descending to such depths of wickedness and depravity? Just think, Gladys was only fourteen! A perfect baby! She

was lured on and on in spite of all Alma could do, until to-day she is an outcast; a fallen woman!"

"My God! and you are befriending her!" cried the doctor, suddenly. "You are a true woman, Marion Marlowe! Would to Heaven that I could protect you!"

He was kneeling at her side as he spoke, and his arms were about her, but Marion did not rise—only blushed harder and harder with her face averted.

"Marion, dearest Marion! Will you never love me!" he whispered, passionately. "Will your heart never awake and respond to my passion! I am mad with love for you, my darling! I believe it will kill me to control myself much longer!"

He had imprisoned her hand in his as he spoke, and as he finished he raised it to his lips and kissed it warmly.

The wave of color that had crimsoned Marion's brow seemed to retreat like magic and her face became pallid. She was thrilling with pleasure in every fibre of her being, for those warm, eager kisses seemed to have enthralled her.

"Marion, answer me! Is there no hope, little one? Are you sure, very sure, that you do not love me, sweetheart?"

Dr. Brookes' voice was like music to her ears and as his blonde head touched her own lightly, she trembled with emotion.

"I have waited so long, Marion, yet I do not complain," went on the pleading tones, softly, "but I am hungry for your love, my beautiful Queen Marion! Just think how happy dear Alma will be! Must I go to her wedding to-morrow and witness her joy and then return once more to my desolate life? Oh, Marion, if you only knew the bliss, the rapture of love! It is the only thing on earth that is worth knowing or having! I would shield you so carefully, dear! I would guard you so tenderly! Can you not trust your life into my keeping, Marion?"

As the last words passed his lips the fair head drooped gently. The next moment it was pillowed upon the young physician's shoulder. There was not a sound in the room as his loving arms closed about her, and as Marion felt his lips lightly pressing

her own, the whole world with its miseries was completely forgotten.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAWYER'S WARNING.

It was hard to come back to the stern realities of life, but Marion was too anxious about her friend to remain long in this paradise of happiness which had suddenly opened before her.

With a little cry of remorse at her own forgetfulness, she attempted to raise her head from the handsome young man's shoulder.

"Not yet, darling," whispered the eager voice in her ear. "You must tell me something before I let you go. You must answer my question—do you love me, Marion?"

The lovely girl's face was hidden upon his shoulder again, then she answered his question in a thrilling whisper.

"I do—I am sure I do, Reginald." There was another kiss upon her ruby lips, and Dr. Brookes pressed her to his heart in a perfect spasm of ecstasy.

He had waited so long for those rapturous words, but now that she had spoken them, he could hardly believe them.

How was it possible that this girl, this queen of her sex, could really love him! In an instant he seemed to himself to be all unworthy of her affection.

There was a moment of silence while he strained her to his heart, then Marion raised her fair head and gently moved away from him.

"I don't know why I did not realize that I loved you before," she said, falteringly. "but somehow I could never quite make up my mind; but this morning, oh, Reginald, I was so unhappy this morning; I was thinking how happy dear Alma would be, and honestly, I think I envied her just a little, and then it came to me that it was all my own fault that I wasn't happy, and then, well, then Bert brought me the news about Alma and I guess the reaction came. Anyway, I felt better."

"And you do not envy Alma now, darling! You are happy also, are you not?" asked the doctor, eagerly.

Marion laid her head voluntarily upon the broad shoulder as she answered:

"Yes, Reginald; I think I am perfectly happy, or I would be if it were not for Alma's trouble! We are forgetting Alma, Reginald, and we must not forget her!"

"We will not!" said the young man, quickly, as he rose to his feet. "Even in the happiest moment of my life I will try to remember the sorrows of others. We must plan some way to protect Alma from her sister—at least until after the wedding to-morrow."

Marion had risen as he spoke, and they were now standing side by side, the doctor's hands inclosing her own and his eyes fixed upon her face with a glance of devotion.

"You and I will save Gladys, if it is possible, darling," he went on, brightly, "and, do you know, Marion, I have the feeling that I could not fail at anything if you were beside me to cheer me with your affection."

He looked at her so proudly that it was Marion's turn to feel humbled. She could hardly imagine herself worthy of this noble young man's adoration.

"We will plan and work together, Reginald," she said at last, "but, oh, I do hope I have read my heart aright! I think I love you with all my soul! It would be perfectly dreadful if I should find later on that I had been mistaken."

A look of horror dilated her wide gray eyes as she spoke, and in an instant a shadow passed over the young physician's features.

"Don't Marion! Don't think of such a thing!" he said, sharply. "You must love me, little woman! I should be wretched if you did not! You are the sunshine of my very existence, Marion!"

"I will try to be always," was the solemn answer, "but now we must forget ourselves and talk about Alma."

She dropped into her chair again as she spoke, and at that instant some one tinkled the bell at the door of the reception room.

Dr. Brookes waited a moment until his boy tapped upon the door, then excusing himself to Marion he stepped out of the office.

The young girl was almost glad of this moment of isolation, for her brain was in a whirl and every pulse was throbbing wildly. It was beautiful to be loved as the doctor

loved her. She had never before imagined such rapture as she had known during those brief moments in which her lover had been embracing her.

Something, she hardly knew what, was stealing over her senses. It was an indefinable longing for a further expression of his love—a hungry craving for more whispered words, more kisses and caresses.

She tried to think of Alma, but it was almost impossible now, and as the moments passed and Dr. Brookes did not appear, she rose and paced the office restlessly.

"It must be love! It must be!" she whispered over and over. "Oh, Reginald, why did I not yield to your entreaties before! How could I have been so foolish as to have discouraged your affection?"

She sank into a chair and clasped her hands together. Would he never come back and tell her again that he loved her?

The door leading to the reception room was slightly ajar, and she could hardly resist the impulse to move a little nearer to it.

A low murmur of conversation was coming to her ears, and as she sat almost breathless a few words became audible.

"It is for your own sake, Reginald," said a low masculine voice. "As your friend I have come here only to warn you."

"You have come too late," was the young physician's reply, and Marion caught her breath sharply as she noted the sadness, almost despair, in his accents.

What had happened?

The young girl clenched her hands in agony, but she would not move a muscle.

Whatever it was, it was not intended for her ears, yet she was bound to hear if they spoke a particle louder.

Her brain was still a little dazed, but she was trying to think calmly. Suddenly she heard the strange voice in the reception room exclaim almost irritably:

"It is your father's will, Reginald, and you must abide by it. As his lawyer and friend, I must do my duty. Not a penny of his money will come to you at your mother's death if you persist in your ambition to marry an actress!"

The words fell upon Marion's brain with

the force of a sledge hammer. The next second, with a grasp of horror, she came to her senses.

It took but an instant to rise and noiselessly close the reception room door; then, almost without knowing what she was doing, the young girl crossed the room and paused before a full length mirror.

A white face and dilated eyes stared back at her from the glass. There was not a vestige of her great happiness visible upon her features.

What should she do?

Should she release him at once?

The two questions flashed into her mind almost simultaneously. Another interval of time passed, but she did not move. Then she heard the outer door slam and the other door opened softly.

As she turned slowly to greet her lover, her lips quivered with agony, but one glance at his face made her cry out in genuine amazement.

Dr. Brookes came toward her as smilingly as ever. There was not a trace of annoyance, even, upon his handsome features.

CHAPTER V.

MORE ECSTASY.

"What is it, darling?"

Dr. Brookes asked the question sharply, then he suddenly stood still and a frown distorted his broad forehead.

"How stupid of me not to have closed the door! Of course, you heard what Mr. Carson said, and you are in agony this minute, my own dear Marion."

"But if it is true—what he said—we must never do it, Reginald," Marion burst out, impetuously. "If it is against your father's wishes, we must never marry!"

"Nonsense!" retorted the physician, as he put his arm around her. "As if an actor could not marry an actress! I would like to see the will or the law that could prevent it."

"Oh, but you are not an actor by profession," said Marion, quickly, "you only act for fun and that is altogether different."

"Perhaps I am not an actor at all," said

the doctor, slyly; "perhaps I am only a make-believe, or a 'fake,' as they call them."

Marion had to smile, but she was still greatly excited, for she knew instinctively that his love would conceal the truth if he thought by so doing he could save her any suffering.

"See here, Marion," he said, suddenly, in a decidedly matter of fact tone, "I'm half glad and half sorry that you overheard our conversation. It is true that father was bitterly opposed to what he was pleased to term a *mésalliance*, but you see he had never been honored with your acquaintance, so he did not know what a lady you are, actress or no actress. Now, suppose our marriage does cut me out of a hundred thousand or so! I still have the income that I inherit from my grandmother, and when my profession fails me there is always another alternative—I can go back on the stage and earn a fairly good living."

He was so genuinely happy as he spoke that Marion slowly recovered her spirits, and the roses came back to her cheeks and lips, while her eyes sparkled with eagerness.

"And I have my fortune! Oh, I did not think of all that, Reginald! Still, I would not wish you to disobey your father if there was one thought in your heart that you were wrong in doing so!"

"Which there is not, dearest," was the prompt response, as the doctor touched her rosy cheeks with his lips.

"I presume I loved and respected my father as much as any son ever did," he went on, gayly, "but in my opinion a parent oversteps his authority when he interferes with his child's love affairs, without knowing all the circumstances, and, if I would not let a live man interfere, I certainly shall not let a dead one—that is stretching the boundaries of sentiment out of all proportion, Marion."

"I think you are right! A parent should not interfere in such a case," repeated Marion, slowly. "We are separate and distinct individuals who must work out our own destinies. No one can live our lives for us or answer for us at the Judgment Day. No, there is no real need for you to obey your father, Reginald. I should say the same, if

it were any one else, I am sure. We have a perfect right to marry, if we love each other, Reginald."

"And we do, don't we, darling?" cried the doctor, catching her in his arms. "We love each other desperately, don't we, Marion? I could not think of living much longer without you!"

As he held her closely to his breast, Marion's heart almost stopped beating. She was overcome with the fierceness of her own newly-awakened passion.

The doctor rained his kisses upon her lovely lips and, as he felt her form trembling in his grasp, he became almost intoxicated with his happiness.

That this beautiful girl really loved him was bliss unspeakable. That she should respond to his caresses was the delirium of ecstasy. Again the world was forgotten and the moments sped quickly by, while Marion was folded to the heart of her noble lover.

Another peal of the office bell interrupted the tender scene, and as Dr. Brookes answered the summons Marion sank slowly into a chair, her breath coming in gasps, her lashes wet with the dew of happiness.

The fierceness of her love had frightened her a little, for it had seized her like a tempest and almost overcome her.

To go out of his presence now would be a strain upon her strength. It did not seem as if she could leave him even for a minute. A sharp exclamation from the other room made her spring to her feet. Alma Allyn was out there and was asking for her.

A flush of shame mounted to Marion's forehead, but she sprang to the door without a moment's hesitation.

"Oh, Alma, forgive me! I forgot you completely," she cried, remorsefully. "I met the doctor and came here to talk about Gladys, but—but——"

"But after you got here you talked about yourselves! Well, I don't blame you a little but," broke in Miss Allyn, "but do help me now, for I am in a peck of trouble! My sister and I have had a quarrel and she has run away from me, swearing that she will not leave a stone unturned to upset my wedding to-morrow!"

"The wretched girl! How wicked she

is!" gasped Marion. "Oh, we must find her, Reginald, in time to prevent her!"

Marion's voice was ringing with anguish, but there was a tender tone in its cadence, and, as Miss Allyn detected it, she glanced from one to the other.

"Oh, Marion! Oh, Dr. Brookes! Have you really been and gone and done it!" she cried, eagerly. "If you really have, please do accept my blessing! I'll be the happiest woman in the world when you two love each other!"

"Then please proceed to be happy!" exclaimed Dr. Brookes, as he put his arm around Marion and drew her head to his shoulder.

"Marion has at last discovered that she loves me, Alma, and, it is needless to say that she has made me radiantly happy!"

"No, it sticks out all over you," retorted Miss Allyn, calmly. "You look exactly as Henry did when I told him I loved him. I can't define the look exactly, because it is undefinable, but it's a sort of a cross between angelic wisdom and total idiocy!"

"Great Heaven! What a sight I must be!" cried the doctor, laughing, but Marion did not smile, for she was thinking of Gladys.

"We must find her right away," she began, decidedly. "Just think how awful it would be if she came to the wedding intoxicated. It would get in the papers, perhaps, and that would be dreadful!"

"It must be prevented!" said Dr. Brookes, sternly. "So tell us what she said and where you think she has gone, Alma, and I will try to come back to earth and find her."

"It seems a pity to bring you back," said Miss Allyn, sorrowfully.

"Our next flight will be just that much sweeter," replied the doctor, as he gave Marion a kiss that made her blush as red as a poppy.

"I think she has run away with a fellow named Barnes," began Alma, bitterly. "He came to the hotel just after you left, Marion, and it was because I objected to her going out with him that she abused me so cruelly."

"And you think he will help her to wreak her revenge?" asked the doctor, quickly.

"He is weak enough and base enough to do anything she tells him," was the sad an-

swer, "and the worst of it is, he knows my Henry. He saw him on two or three occasions when he was a newspaper reporter.

"That makes it easier for us to trace him," said the doctor, cheerfully. "Mr. Fairfax will not forget his cleverness as a detective, you can bet, particularly when it is for his sweetheart that he is working. I will order my carriage and go to him at once and, meanwhile, I will call a cab and send you ladies—where? To the hotel where Alma is stopping or up to sister Dollie's?"

Marion smiled at him sweetly as he added the last; then, with just a glance at Alma, she answered, quickly:

"Send us to Dollie's, please. We will be just in time for dinner. Besides, Bert is up there and, of course, he will wish to help us. I will tell him to start at once and try to find Gladys."

CHAPTER VI.

CONFIDENCES.

Easter Tuesday dawned with a cloudless sky, yet Alma Allyn awoke with a shadow on her heart, for she had been obliged to retire without hearing from Gladys.

Marion hurried down to the hotel at an early hour and, as they took a last careful look at the wedding finery, the two girls sadly talked over the situation.

"Bert says that he visited every beer garden and music hall in town pretty nearly," said Marion. "He came in this morning and reported as he promised, and I never saw him look so bitterly disappointed."

"And Henry sent me a note at breakfast time," answered Miss Allyn, as she drew it from her pocket. "He says he glanced in at a dozen theatres and fully double that many restaurants, while Dr. Brookes took it upon himself to visit some horrible places, regular dives and dens of iniquity, Marion."

Marion's cheeks paled a little as she thought of her lover's danger, but, knowing that he was safe at the present time, she did not express her feelings.

"Just think of my sister being hidden in such places as those, and by her own desire," went on Miss Allyn, bitterly. "Oh, Marion! Do you think it is wrong for me to feel

hard toward her just now? Just think how completely she has wrecked the happiness of my wedding!"

"Let us hope that she will reconsider her threats and stay away," said Marion, cheerfully. "She may, you know, Alma, and then you could be happy."

"She will stay away if she is too drunk to come! That is my only hope!" said Miss Allyn, more bitterly.

"Well, I never hoped for any such thing before, but I do honestly hope it now," said Marion, slowly. "If nothing else will save you, Alma, I can even long for that. I don't care how drunk she is so long as she doesn't disturb you! Really, for once, I could almost look upon intemperance as a positive blessing."

"There is another note from Henry, I guess!" cried Alma, as some one tapped upon the door. "Bless his dear old heart! He knows exactly how I am worrying, and he is trying to relieve me."

She opened the door as she spoke and a bell boy handed in a basket of flowers, besides a dainty note from her lover.

Miss Allyn deposited the flowers in Marion's lap, then hastily tore open the note and read it.

"Not a word of Gladys! She has vanished completely," she said, soberly, "and Henry asks if I do not think it would be wise to change the hour of the ceremony."

"I don't just see how you can," said Marion, thoughtfully. "It would be the surest way in the world of advertising your secret, for, of course, the clergyman and the guests would be curious to know the reason. No, I wouldn't do that, Alma. I would just go ahead as you have planned and we must all be on the lookout to prevent trouble."

"I guess you are right," said Miss Allyn, gloomily; then she put the note back in the envelope and kissed it tenderly.

Another tap at the door followed and two lovely bouquets were brought in, then came a tiny parcel, which Miss Allyn hastened to open.

"The flowers are from Howard Everett and Archie Ray," cried Marion, as she glanced at the cards, "and they are exquisite, Alma, especially those lilies."

A little scream of delight from Alma cut short her words. She was holding out a jewel case upon which lay a dainty locket.

"Isn't that just sweet! Diamonds and emeralds and such a neat design! Your lover has perfect taste!" murmured Marion, delightedly.

"I have the dearest lover in the world, haven't I, Marion?" asked Alma, eagerly. "Could any one be more thoughtful and considerate than my Henry?"

A deep red flush mounted to Marion's brow and for a moment she could only restrain her words with difficulty.

"Oh, Marion! I forgot that you were in love!" cried her friend, penitently. "In my own happiness, I forgot yours, but I'll take it all back, dearie! Are not our two lovers the sweetest, dearest fellows in creation?"

She put her arm around Marion's shoulders as she waited for her reply, and as the fair girl was blushing furiously she bent and kissed her.

"I know just how you feel! You don't want to talk about it, do you, Marion?" she went on, quickly. "Such happiness cannot find expression in words at first, but you will have to talk soon, Marion, or the very happiness will kill you. There must be an escape valve, and it is only found by talking."

"I don't mind talking to you one bit," began Marion, stoutly. "Of course, it is hard to say just how one feels, but oh, Alma, darling, isn't it perfectly heavenly!"

There was a silent embrace and another kiss, then Marion rose, for it was time to go back to Dollie.

"I'll be here in time to help you dress," she said, gayly, "and, of course, I'll bring my own finery with me. As I am to be the maid of honor, I shall try to look as nice as possible, and the doctor sent me up some exquisite flowers to wear in my corsage."

"It will seem more like a funeral than a wedding, if this suspense is not ended," said Miss Allyn, wearily.

"I'll just shake in my shoes when I enter that church for fear Gladys will come reeling in and do something to disgrace me."

"Mr. Fairfax must have a detective or two outside," said Marion, decidedly. "Of

course, he has thought of that, hasn't he, Alma?"

"Oh, yes, there will be detectives, but they could never stop Gladys!" was the answer. "Why, the Evil One couldn't stop that girl when there is a drop of whisky in her! Such scenes as I have gone through you could never imagine, Marion."

"And yet I don't despair of her reformation," said Marion, quickly; "the secret seems to be to keep her in good company."

"And that can only be done by locking her in," was the reply, "and the saints forbid that I should ever be her jailer."

"Well, I'd do it and pretty quick, too, if it was necessary for her good," exclaimed Marion, stoutly. "I'd shut her up in a room and keep her there for a month if for no other reason than to get her thoroughly sober."

"It can't be done, girly; the law won't permit it. No matter how bad she is, she has a right to be bad. The ones I'd like to jail are the ones who offer her liquor. What a lot of knaves they must be! How absolutely without honor! Poor Gladys, with all her wicked ways, I can't help pitying her!"

"You must not cry on your wedding day, Alma!" said Marion, quickly, as she saw her friend's lips tremble. "I shall not cry upon mine no matter what happens! I think I shall be so radiantly happy that nothing will affect me! I shall be insensible to anything but my own great rapture!"

"You do love him dearly, don't you, Marion?" asked Miss Allyn, eagerly. "Then you can imagine, perhaps, what the temptation would be if Dr. Brookes were to coax you to forget your honor!"

She was thinking of Gladys as she spoke and her voice had grown tender. It was one of the moments in which she loved and pitied her sister.

The blood left Marion's cheeks and her frame trembled convulsively and for just a moment she could not trust herself to answer.

"These great loves are dreadfully dangerous," went on Miss Allyn, softly. "We give heart and soul into our lover's keeping, then how can we be expected to have the strength to deny our bodies?"

"I thought of that yesterday," stammered Marion, faintly. "I could not help thinking of it, Alma, when Reginald kissed me! Oh, I would have given the world to have been his wife at that moment, and yet, Alma, do you know that if he had really tempted me I think my soul would have revolted at such a dreadful thing and I believe—yes, I know, that I would have hated him instantly!"

Her eyes flashed as she spoke and a flush of pride dyed her cheeks as Alma gazed at her admiringly. She held out both hands to her.

"God help those poor creatures who have not your sense of honor, Marion Marlowe," she said, solemnly. "Neither you nor I know how bravely they struggle nor can we measure the depths of their agony when they have fallen!"

"I have always pitied them, even when I did not know," said Marion, sadly, "but, now that I understand how they tremble upon the very brink of shame, I thank Heaven that I have a little strength of character and also for giving me so noble a lover!"

CHAPTER VII.

AT THE CHURCH.

"Well, here we are! Now, where is the bridal party?"

Bert Jackson consulted his watch as he asked the question.

"There's five minutes yet, Jackson! Don't get impatient," was the laughing answer, as Howard Everett, an old friend of Alma's, joined him in the vestibule of the church, which was prettily decorated with flowers for the coming wedding.

The organ was already pealing from the loft above and a dozen or more curious pedestrians had ventured in, for Miss Allyn's circle of friends was not so large as to make tickets a necessity.

Bert and Mr. Everett were to act as ushers, while Dr. Brookes was best man and Marion the maid of honor.

Dollie and Miss Ellis, Bert Jackson's sweetheart, were to act as bridesmaids, and Archie Ray had laughingly offered to fill a

father's place and "give away" the bride at the proper moment.

"Poor Alma! She has no parents and worse than no sister," said Bert, as he and Everett conversed together. "Now, if that girl Gladys don't turn up all will go as merry as a wedding bell, but if she arrives on the scene Heaven help the lot of us, for she's bound to kick up the deuce of a racket!"

"There are two detectives outside," said Everett, thoughtfully, "and I heard Fairfax tell them to keep a mighty sharp lookout. If Gladys comes to the wedding, 'clothed and in her right mind,' she is to be admitted, but if there is a trace of 'Oh, be joyful' about her, she is to be quietly but firmly excluded!"

"Gee whiz! That sounds easy, old man," said Bert, laughing, "but ain't you shaking hands with yourself that you don't have to do the excluding? I give you my word I'd rather buck up against the police force and the militia combined than to tackle one plain, ordinary, everyday drunken woman."

"Poor Miss Allyn! I pity her," was Everett's answer. "It is a wonder that she can smile on her wedding day. It must be a perpetual grief to her to have such a sister."

Three or four more women entered just then, and Bert escorted them to seats, looking them over carefully, for fear that one of them might be Gladys.

There was a rustle of silk near the door as he returned and Flora Villard, Mr. Everett's sister, entered upon the arm of her husband.

"We are horribly early, I know, but I just couldn't help coming," began Flora, softly. "I do so want to see the bride come in. Marion wrote me that her wedding dress was a dream of beauty."

"Marion presented it, I believe," said Mr. Everett, "and Bert decorated the church—how do you like it, Flora?"

"Simply exquisite! I always did love an Easter wedding," was the enthusiastic answer. "There is no flower so appropriate for a wedding as the lily in my opinion. But come on, Tom, we must take our seats. It isn't a bit proper to be standing here chatting."

"Miss Allyn is no stickler for conventionalities," laughed Mr. Everett, as they started down the aisle. "She told me herself that she wanted to have a picnic at her wedding, so if you had brought your lunch baskets it wouldn't matter."

"I'm dying to see Marion," whispered Tom, as he accepted the seat. "I'll bet she'll look stunning in her bridesmaid's costume."

"Of course she will! She couldn't help it! Make yourselves comfortable now while I attend to the others. Whew! What a lot of unbidden guests are coming to the wedding!" was Everett's answer.

Flora turned half around in her seat and glanced at the group that had just entered.

"They had lots of nerve, that is all I have to say! They must be overstocked with curiosity to come where they are not wanted," she said, softly.

"Miss Allyn won't care, so don't get riled, Flo," whispered her husband, and, just at that moment, Bert ushered another couple into the same seat and warm greetings followed.

"Oh, Miss Ray! I am so glad to see you!" cried Flora, enthusiastically, as she shook hands with a stately young woman, and then bowed to her escort, who was the city editor of one of the principal papers.

The next moment the minister appeared at the chancel.

"Hush! They are coming!" whispered Villard, as a crash from the organ overhead betokened the hour for the service, then as the first chords of the wedding march floated forth, Mr. Fairfax, accompanied by Dr. Brookes, took his place at the right of the minister.

"Looks worried, but happy," muttered Flora, as she stared at him; then her attention was called to the appearance of the bridal party, which was slowly walking up the main aisle toward the beautifully decorated altar.

"Bert feels his oats, and my! isn't he handsome!" whispered Flora, again. "And, dear me! How lovely my brother looks! Really, I never knew Howard was such a fine looking fellow."

"Isn't Dollie sweet?" murmured Miss Ray, cautiously, "and the young lady with her

is as pretty as a peach! By the way, she is Bert Jackson's *fiancée*, isn't she?"

Flora nodded her head and then half rose on tiptoe, for she had just caught the first glimpse of Marion.

The young girl had not forgotten the rule of etiquette, which says to never try to outshine a bride at her own wedding, but, even in her simple white dress, her beauty was resplendent. It was impossible to hide or even modify it.

She was carrying a huge basket of flowers with unconscious grace, and her eyes were shining like stars at the thought of Alma's happiness.

A moment later there was a little gasp of astonishment from each of Alma's friends, for the bride-elect, who was not really a beautiful girl, appeared, looking positively queenly in her bridal finery.

She walked with a graceful step and there was a smile upon her lips, but those who were nearest could see that her face was pallid.

That she was still worrying about her sister was apparent to those who knew the secret, but she was trying bravely to conceal her fears, and as she leaned upon her handsome escort she smiled up at him brightly.

"Archie is grand!" whispered Flora again, when she had recovered a little. "He is just tall enough and distinguished enough to look well with Alma. She couldn't have chosen a better father!"

"I was so amused when Archie told me," began Miss Ray, and then the organ ceased and the bridal party stood silent, while every eye in the church was riveted upon the clergyman.

But the first words of the service had not been spoken when there was a little stir near the door.

Two men had entered the church, closely followed by one of the detectives, and as they took seats noisily on the side aisle in a pew near the chancel, even the bride turned her head and glanced at them uneasily.

"Well, of all things," whispered Flora Villard, but her husband raised his finger to silence her.

The next second the voice of the clergy-

man fell upon their ears, and Alma's marriage service was fairly started.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEARFUL SCENE.

There was not a sound in the church but that of the clergyman's voice as the service progressed, and both Alma and her friends were beginning to feel easier.

Gladys had apparently forgotten her evil threat and decided not to be present at her sister's wedding.

The clergyman had just made the momentous statement, "If any man know any just cause or impediment why this couple should not be joined together in the bonds of holy matrimony, let him speak now or forever hold his peace," and, as usual, a brief spell of silence followed; then, to the amazement of every one present, one of the strange men arose and his voice fell upon the air like a death knell as he answered:

"I do, and as a servant of justice, I demand that this ceremony cease. There is a moral reason why this man and this woman shall not be wedded."

A little gasp from Alma was followed by a cry from Marion, then the clergyman stepped forward and expostulated sternly.

"We will hear your reason, sir: although you have offered it at a most untimely season."

"Couldn't be helped, your reverence. I did not know of it until last night, and it has taken me all the morning to prove my client's story," was the answer.

"You are a lawyer, then," said Mr. Fairfax, stepping forward. "Pray let us hear your objection as quickly as possible."

The man began fumbling in his pockets and the suspense became almost unendurable. Even the strangers in the church held their breath in astonishment.

"I'll speak of it quick enough and plain enough," muttered the stranger, a little angrily, "and it's no pleasanter for me than it is for you, I reckon. I've got a reason why you should not marry that lady, and although it ain't a legal reason, I'm thinking it will be sufficient to stop the marriage."

There was another entrance at the wide

doors, but no one seemed to observe it, and as a young woman, clad all in black, slunk into one of the rear pews, the second detective from the outside took a seat just behind her.

"There, sir! There is my reason for forbidding this marriage to go on!" exclaimed the stranger, loudly, as he succeeded in extracting a paper from his inner pocket.

"I had it put in writing so as to be more explicit. It would have been too long a speech for 'yours truly' to deliver."

He handed the paper over to the clergyman, and for a moment the clergyman and Mr. Fairfax looked at each other.

Then the bridegroom-elect smiled and bowed slightly, at the same time placing his arm around Alma and stepping back a little, leaving the mysterious paper to be opened by the minister.

"What can it be, darling?" whispered Alma, faintly. "Some mistake in your identity or something probably. Perhaps, some of your enemies are trying to get square with you."

"It is shameful!" whispered Marion, who had moved closer to her side. "I can't imagine any one doing such a cruel thing. Well, there's one thing certain—it cannot be Gladys."

"No, I don't think she can have anything to do with it, and yet we can't tell," murmured Miss Allyn, with her eyes upon the clergyman's face; then she gave a little cry and clutched her lover's arm tighter.

The clergyman had been reading the paper attentively, and as he read his kind face grew paler and paler and as he finished his perusal his lips trembled ominously.

"Well, your reverence, did I do right in stopping the wedding?" asked the stranger, coarsely. "There wasn't anything else for me to do but protect my client, was there?"

The clergyman did not answer. He seemed overcome with emotion. A moment later he recovered himself and handed the paper to Mr. Fairfax.

"Read it," he said, huskily, "and, if it is false, you have only to say so, and I will continue the service. If it is true," here his voice shook with horror and indignation, "may God have mercy upon your soul, for

you would have no moral right to marry this pure woman!"

Henry Fairfax sprang forward at the clergyman's words. There was a look upon his face that baffled description; as he opened the paper, Alma bit her lips hard; then, taking a step forward, she said, clearly and distinctly:

"Henry, darling, I am your wife! Shall we read the paper together?"

There was a moment's silence while every one stared at the bride's fair face. It was positively radiant now in its womanly trust and affection.

Mr. Fairfax bent and kissed her and then moved a little to one side.

"No, Alma!" he said, decidedly, "you shall not be tortured by such an indignity. This is for me to settle. My wife is not to be bothered."

Marion stepped forward and put her arm around Alma's waist, while the best man and the ushers formed a half circle around them.

"Don't worry, Alma! Henry will explain it," whispered Marion, cheerfully. "It can't be so bad as not to admit of an explanation."

"And as soon as it is explained I'll punch that galoot's face," murmured Bert, as he glared savagely at the countenance of the intruding lawyer.

"I'll teach him to come to our wedding with his objections and in a sack coat, too—the beastly lubber!" he concluded.

Marion had been watching the face of the groom as he read the paper, but, as Bert spoke, she glanced over the vast room in an anxious manner.

The next second she gripped Bert's arm and drew him back a little.

"Look, Bert! Way back down the centre aisle! Do you see that woman in black shrinking back into that pew? That is Gladys Allyn, poor Alma's sister!"

Bert had all he could do to suppress a whistle as he followed Marion's glance and caught a glimpse of the shrinking figure.

The light in the church was dim, so he was obliged to stare hard for a minute, then a sound from Mr. Fairfax brought him back to his surroundings.

The bridegroom's face was pale, but his eyes were flashing angrily, and, as he handed the paper back to the clergyman, he said, distinctly:

"I pronounce that paper a diabolical hoax, Mr. MacPherson. I know no more of the statements it contains than you do at this minute; therefore, I implore you to proceed and unite us in marriage."

The clergyman looked relieved, but he was obliged to answer cautiously.

"Miss Allyn must know the contents of that paper before I proceed," he said, firmly. "Then, if she believes and accepts you, my conscience is clear in the matter."

Mr. Fairfax turned, if possible, a few shades paler, but an imploring word from Alma's lips made him hesitate no longer.

"I will tell you of what I stand accused," he tried to say, smilingly, "yet I would spare you if I could, for it will only shock you, Alma."

"Perhaps I had better tell her," said the clergyman, sympathetically; then, without waiting for any consent, he turned and faced Miss Allyn. "This paper states that your affianced husband is guilty of a great sin," he said, rapidly. "He is accused of ruining a young girl of fourteen, of luring her into sin and all the byways of evil and then leaving her to her fate, after he had completed her degradation."

As the clergyman finished, Alma raised her head proudly.

"Who dares to accuse my lover of such a sin?" she asked, fiercely. "Such a thing is impossible, I will not believe it!"

There was a rustle of a woman's dress and Gladys Allyn glided up the aisle, never slackening her speed until she had reached the chancel steps.

"I accuse him, Alma!" she said, fiercely, as she pointed her finger straight at Fairfax. "I swear he is the man who first led me astray! Now then, do you wish to marry the destroyer of your sister?"

CHAPTER IX.

THE END OF THE SERVICE.

The horror of her words seemed to freeze every one present, and for an instant Henry

Fairfax had hard work to keep from springing at the woman and expressing in forceful deeds his indignation at her statement.

There was a hurried consultation between the clergyman and Dr. Brookes and then the young physician put his hand upon the bridegroom's shoulder.

"Keep cool, old man! We'll fix it in a minute!" he said, softly. "Go into the vestry room and take the ladies with you. Your best man and ushers will deal with this problem."

"If she were only a man," muttered Fairfax, glaring at Gladys, "but I guess you are right, doc! I will do as you tell me!"

He offered his arm to Alma, who accepted it instantly, then Bert took Marion under his wing, while Mr. Ray brought the two bridesmaids. A moment later every man in the party was back at the altar rail, but Gladys had disappeared, and so had one of the detectives.

"You can't blame me if it isn't true," the lawyer was saying, excitedly. "You have her deposition, and this man is her witness. He has known Fairfax for years, and he corroborates her statements."

The man at his side nodded his head a little sheepishly. He was a coarse, silly looking fellow, and as Fairfax stared at him he suddenly recognized him.

"So you are on my track, are you, Barnes?" he said, with a sneer. "Well, I might have known that it was some one like you. I suppose you are trying to get square with me for putting you in prison."

The fellow's face flushed crimson, but he did not reply, and Mr. Fairfax turned to his friends with a word of explanation.

"He used to be a sneak thief, and I sent him up. This is one of my rewards for doing my duty as a detective."

"There's nothing more for you to remain for, sir," said the clergyman, looking straight at the lawyer. "You have accomplished your end and interrupted the wedding, but I do not think it is within your power to prevent it altogether."

"I should say not!" exclaimed Fairfax, with a shrug of the shoulders. "We shall be married, Alma and I, as soon as we can make her sister retract that statement!"

"Bosh! I wouldn't wait for that! We all know it's a lie!" exclaimed Bert, stontly. "Of course, the minister here couldn't do any different, but he'll marry you to-morrow all right, won't you, Mr. MacPherson?"

Bert let his hand drop on the minister's back through very excess of emotion, and while the caress was not a familiar one to the reverend gentleman, he was too good-natured to show resentment.

"I will certainly marry them as soon as the woman's story is disposed of," he said, promptly. "It seems incredible that a sister should trump up such a tale. I assure you, if she is falsifying, I trust that she will be punished."

"She'd get it in the neck if I had my say," growled Bert, but Henry Fairfax only shook his head, sadly.

"I must not forget that she is Alma's sister," he said, slowly. "I must be merciful in my dealings, but it is hard, I can tell you! It drives me mad when I think how my poor Alma has suffered."

The church had been slowly emptied, as the group at the altar rail talked, and as the two strangers shuffled out the second detective followed them, after an interchange of signals with Mr. Fairfax.

When the others repaired to the vestry room they found the ladies waiting anxiously. Alma was as white as a ghost, but her spirit had not forsaken her.

"Of course, I knew she would do something awful, but who ever dreamed of her doing that!" she cried, angrily. "Really, I cannot help saying that I thoroughly despise her, and yet I know she has become what she is through the influence of others."

"Well, she don't need to be laying her sins to Henry's door," muttered Bert. "But Jiminy Christmas! Ain't she the champion liar! Why, to look at her face when she said it, one would almost believe her!"

"Well, I didn't believe her a little bit!" exclaimed Miss Allyn, as she glanced lovingly at Fairfax. "The angels in heaven couldn't make me believe Henry was guilty, not if they whispered their tales in my ears in a thousand different tongues!"

"Oh, Alma! I do admire your faith so much," cried Marion, happily. "Yes."

perfectly right to trust your lover! I would trust mine if the whole world contradicted him!"

As she spoke, she turned involuntarily toward Dr. Brookes, and in an instant she was rewarded with a glance of devotion.

"We had better go now," said Mr. Fairfax, suddenly. "There are many of our guests who are waiting, darling, and, of course, they are eager to hear the outcome of this matter."

"Where do you suppose she went? That awful girl, I mean!" spoke up Miss Ellis. "Do you know, I expected she would fly at Mr. Fairfax if he attempted to contradict her!"

"She knew better than that," said Miss Allyn, sadly, and then the bridal party filed out and down the broad aisle of the sanctuary.

Outside in the vestibule, they found quite a group of people waiting, among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Villard and Miss Ray and her escort.

Alma could hardly keep back the tears as they crowded around her, all offering their sympathy and protesting against the interruption.

"It will all be over by this time to-morrow, darling," whispered her lover. "I am sure that Gladys will confess by then. We have her where we want her now, so there will be no one to influence her."

Every one looked at him quickly, so Mr. Fairfax explained.

"One of the detectives followed her and he knows what to do. He will not lose sight of Gladys until she is perfectly sober, then we must force her to retract that contemptible statement," he said, quietly.

"Poor Gladys! Poor, dear wicked sister! How I pity you," moaned Miss Allyn, in agony.

"And we pity you, Alma!" said Miss Ellis, quickly. "I don't believe in wasting sympathy on such a wicked creature!"

"Oh, Miss Ellis, just think how you would feel if it were your sister!" cried Marion, reprovingly.

"I guess I'm no saint," said Miss Ellis, dolefully, "for I just hate that girl and I can't help it, either!"

"And I'd take a fall out of her in a minute if she was a man!" spoke up Bert. "I'm just like you, girly! There's no saint in my composition!"

"There are lots of women who would have believed her and turned on Mr. Fairfax," spoke up Flora Villard. "Why, I heard some people right behind me say they did not believe she was lying; that no girl would speak falsely on a matter like that, and they called you a goose, Alma, for not doubting your lover!"

"Well, I'll be a goose until the end of time, then," said Alma, stoutly. "As if I did not know the depths of depravity which my sister was capable of!"

She gave her lover another glance of tender love and then leaned upon his arm, with her head held proudly. The carriages were slowly drawn to the steps and the bridal party entered them. As Alma had said, it was more like a funeral than a wedding.

Dr. Brookes and Marion sat side by side, and as they witnessed Alma's grief, their hands sought each other's.

"Don't cry, darling," murmured Fairfax, as his sweetheart's head fell upon his shoulder. "So long as you love and trust me, what does it matter? We are man and wife before God and nothing can separate us, no, not even a thousand of such interruptions!"

"And your happiness will only be greater for all this misery," continued Marion, "although it may be difficult just now for you to see it, Alma."

"If Marion would only consent, we would join you at your next attempt," said Dr. Brookes, softly.

"Will you do it, Marion? Will you marry me to-morrow?"

Even Alma raised her head and stifled her sobs at the question. The doctor had successfully dispelled the gloom in the carriage.

"What a ridiculous notion," was the young girl's gay answer. "Why, Reginald, when I marry I want to know it a long time beforehand, so I can have hours and hours in which to anticipate my happiness!"

"Well, about ten minutes of anticipation would do for me," answered the doctor, slyly, "but I don't object in the least to a whole lifetime of reality."

CHAPTER X.

THE FLIGHT.

Marion and Dollie were sitting together after dinner talking over the events of the day when Ralph Moore, Dollie's husband, came quietly and joined them.

He had been out with Bert ever since the service at the church and the girls turned to him instantly to hear what news he brought them.

"Oh, Ralph! What is it!" cried Dollie, as she saw the look upon his face. "Is it possible that you have seen Gladys and that she still sticks to her story!"

Marion held her breath as she listened for the reply and her heart sank in her bosom as Ralph answered, soberly:

"We found her, yes. That detective had her in a private dining-room downtown. Of course, she didn't know he was a detective, and she told him her story. She swears the tale is not false—that Fairfax did ruin her."

"How perfectly awful!" sighed Dollie, but Marion found her voice at last.

"Did the detective believe her, Ralph? Or could he see that she was lying? Oh, I am sure I could tell if I could talk with her a few minutes."

Ralph shook his head more gloomily than ever.

"He says he is tempted to believe her," was his hesitating answer. "Her story is as straight as a string, and she gives dates and everything. She says Fairfax visited her town the summer that she was fourteen, but that he lied to him about her name, so, of course, he had no way of knowing that she was Alma's sister."

"And what does Henry say?" asked Dollie, quickly. "Does he recall any such girl—I mean that he ever met her."

"That is the funny thing about it, he does remember," said Ralph, bluntly. "Why, when she reminded him of certain facts, he turned as gray as ashes. I tell you, we were mighty glad that his sweetheart was not there to see him."

Marion's cheeks were growing pale, but her faith had not wavered, and after a mo-

ment of thought she asked another question.

"Was Gladys sober, Ralph, or was she intoxicated? We have no right to believe her words if she was in the latter condition."

"That is another strange thing about the case," was the eager answer. "She was as sober as you and I are at this moment, Marion, and the strangest thing of all is, that she seems conscience stricken. She says she would never have told if it had not been to save her sister!"

Marion's lips curled involuntarily, and she was about to reply when Bert's familiar pull at the bell wire awoke the very echoes.

Dollie sprang to let him in, and a moment later he was in the parlor, where he stood for a minute without speaking to any one.

"Oh, Bert, you are all upset! I can see it!" cried Dollie. "Is it possible that you believe that Mr. Fairfax is guilty?"

"I'm blest if I know just what to believe!" said Bert, dubiously, as he threw himself down with a bounce upon the sofa. "That girl tells her story as straight as a clothes line! She's got every detail down pat from the very minute of their meeting, and when Henry heard her, you ought to have seen his face! I give you my word it turned every color of the rainbow!"

"But did he admit it?" asked Marion, in an agonized voice.

Bert glanced at Ralph and then answered evasively.

"He did not deny it, Marion, as strange as it may seem! Honest Injinn, I hardly know what to make of the fellow!"

"Where is he now, and where is Alma?" asked Dollie. "Oh, I do hope he has been able to explain it to Alma!"

"I hope so, too," said Marion, slowly. Then she rose from her chair and moved across the parlor to where her hat and wrap lay upon the table.

"What are you going to do, sister?" asked Dollie, quickly. "I can see by your face that you are going to do something."

Marion did not answer, but turned and asked a question.

"Where is she, Bert? Where is Alma's sister? I am going to her this minute to

determine for myself whether she is falsifying."

"She's at the Oakland Hotel," was Bert's prompt answer. "I took her there myself, and she promised to stay there. If she attempts to leave, our detective will follow her."

"I shall go to her at once," said Marion, stoutly, "and after I leave her I shall go straight to Alma, so don't look for me to come home to-night, little sister."

There was a decided ring in her voice, so Dollie did not attempt to restrain her; besides, she was glad she was going, for she had great faith in Marion's ability to get at the truth of a matter.

"I'll go with you, Marion," said Bert, quickly. "My cab is waiting, so we'll be there in a jiffy! Poor Alma, this is a sad ending to her wedding day! I hope things will be brighter at this time to-morrow."

"I'm sure I hope so, too," echoed Dollie, as she watched them hurrying down the stairs; then, a moment later, she heard the rumble of the carriage wheels.

It was nearly nine o'clock, but the streets were brilliantly lighted, and as they neared the Oakland, Marion leaned out of the carriage window.

"Everything looks so gay and cheerful to-night! What a pity that Alma should be so sad," she said, softly, "and to think that only yesterday I was envying her her happiness!"

"And now you've found a large-sized chunk of happiness for yourself, I understand, Marion," was Bert's answer. "Honestly, I've been so excited to-day that I haven't thought to congratulate you, girly, but you can bet I did not lose any time in congratulating the doctor! He's the luckiest man in the world in my opinion!"

Marion's cheeks flushed crimson, but she was smiling happily. She had almost forgotten herself in her anxiety for Alma.

"I think I am lucky, too," she said, in a whisper. "Reginald is the noblest, truest man I ever met! Oh, Bert, just think how patiently he has waited!"

"You bet! And I shared that wait with him for many moons, Marion! Thank my lucky star and my sweetheart that there was

an end to my vigil! I'd have died of disappointment by this time, if I hadn't switched off, Marion!"

"I'm so glad you did," murmured Marion, slyly, "for, you see, Bert, if you had continued my admirer, I would never have been able to choose between you and the doctor."

"Come off! You're too late, Marion! You never cared for me a little bit," was Bert's answer, then he suddenly leaned forward and peered eagerly from the carriage.

They were in front of the hotel, but there was another cab at the block, and as Marion glanced quickly from the window, she saw Gladys Allyn stepping into it.

"Quick! Look, Bert! She is running away, I verily believe!" she cried, softly. "Oh, where in the world is Henry's detective? There isn't a soul in sight that I can see anywhere!"

Bert had already risen and was speaking to the driver. The next minute he drew a good sized bill from his pocket and thrust it up through the little window.

"Don't let that cab out of your sight for a single minute," he said, sharply. "I'll double that amount if you do your duty!"

The cab with Gladys inside had rattled off, and in another instant they were following it swiftly.

Bert and Marion both scanned the sidewalks eagerly, but there was nothing to be seen of any detective.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE NORTH RIVER.

But the race was not destined to be very long.

The cab with Gladys inside had driven rapidly westward across the city, and at Tenth avenue it suddenly halted, and Gladys sprang from it.

Bert's driver pulled up his horses instantly, and in a moment both Bert and Marion were on the sidewalk and Bert was giving the cabby some hurried instructions.

"Hurry, Bert!" whispered Marion, who was straining her eyes to keep Gladys in sight. "See, the cab has driven away! We must run or we will lose her!"

She picked up her skirts daintily, as she spoke, and the next minute she and Bert were scampering down the dark street, which at that hour seemed to be entirely deserted.

"What the mischief do you suppose she has come over here for?" muttered Bert, as he tried to keep pace with Marion. "Why, when I left her at the hotel, I honestly thought she was beginning to feel ashamed of what she had done, and now I'll bet three dollars she is bent on more mischief!"

"Oh, Bert! I don't! I believe she is making for the river!" gasped Marion, suddenly. "See, she has darted across that street and the pier is open!"

"Great Jumping Jerusalem! I wonder if it can be possible," was Bert's answer, and then they both redoubled their efforts to catch up with the fleeting figure.

It was just as Marion had said. The pier was open, and Gladys was already half way down the deserted structure. As the two dashed on after her, Bert yelled a word of warning.

"Stop her! Stop her!"

Marion joined in the cry, calling "Gladys! Gladys!" at the top of her lungs, but it seemed as if the girl only fled from them faster, and in a second she disappeared in the shadows at the very end of the pier.

But Bert's cry had aroused some one, for as the two stumbled on two men, one a burly policeman, went striding past them.

"Good-by, Marion!" called back Bert, over his shoulder. "I mustn't let the cop outrun me! You can take care of yourself, can't you?"

He did not wait for any answer, but darted off like an arrow, and just as he reached the policeman they all heard a splash in the water.

Marion heard it, too, and for a moment her heart stood still. Then came another splash, and a moment later another.

Gladys had jumped into the river, there was no doubt about that, but just for a moment Marion almost forgot the girl in her anxiety over Bert's danger.

Her limbs were trembling so she could hardly walk, but she managed to drag herself to the very edge of the pier, where the

policeman was lying at full length and reaching down over the rotten timbers.

It seemed like an eternity, but it was in reality but a few minutes when Gladys was lifted up by two pairs of strong arms and seized by the muscular policeman.

Then Bert dragged himself up over the edge of the pier and gave his hand to the man who had shared his danger.

"So you were watching her after all," he said, as he recognized the detective. "I thought when I saw her bolt into that cab that you'd thrown up your job. I'm awfully glad that I was mistaken!"

"Well, I ain't so glad," said the detective, whose teeth were chattering, "you can bet if I had guessed that she was heading for the river I'd have suddenly discovered that this wasn't my vocation."

As they talked, the two men were wringing out their wet garments as best they could, while the officer, with Marion's help, was trying to bring Gladys back to consciousness.

"She's more scared than hurt, I reckon," said the policeman, looking up. "There ain't nothing wrong with her, boys, except that she's fainted. This gal here will have her O. K. in a minute."

"Gladys! Gladys!" called Marion, softly, as she took the girl's wet head on her knee and stroked her forehead.

The moon was rising and lighting up the pier, and as Gladys finally opened her eyes she looked straight up at Marion, whose face was as white as death in the moonlight.

There was a sharp cry of horror and a startled look overspread her face.

"Oh, where am I? What has happened?" she cried, hysterically. "My God! Am I dead! Is this an angel?"

"You can bet your life it is!" broke in Bert's voice, promptly.

"But you ain't dead a little bit! You are alive and kicking!"

Marion tried to smile, but it was a feeble effort, for she was still trembling all over from the thrilling situation.

"Oh, Gladys! Why did you try to die with such a sin upon your conscience?" she blurted out, finally. "How could you think of going to the judgment before you had righted your wrong—before you had re-

tracted that statement which you made to injure your sister!"

A moan from Gladys made her almost repent her outburst. The girl was thoroughly frightened and was beginning to sob pitifully.

"I didn't think of that," she wailed, hysterically. "I hated Al and I hated myself! Oh, it is too late, now! Why did you try to save me!"

"You are not fit to die," said Marion, solemnly. "You are a wicked girl and you must repent your sinfulness. Promise me, Gladys, that you will retract that statement. Promise me this minute; do you hear me, Gladys?"

Marion was so excited that she shook the girl by the shoulders, and then, as an ambulance clattered down the pier, she bent lower and waited breathlessly for her answer.

"I'll take it back, every word of it," moaned Gladys, faintly. "It was a lie. Oh, Miss Marlowe, what made me tell it?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Marion, with a sigh of relief. "You were drunk, I suppose. That is the only explanation."

The officer had sent in the "call" while Marion was talking, and he was now explaining the case to the surgeon.

"Please let me go with her to the hospital?" begged Marion, as they lifted the girl into the vehicle. "Really, I must go with her! I must not leave her a minute! The happiness of two people depends upon it, doctor!"

There was no refusing her earnest plea, and, after a short talk with the officer, the surgeon gave her his permission.

Marion got in first and took the half-drowned girl's head upon her knee, while the surgeon occupied his usual place in the rear and the bluecoat crawled up to the seat with the driver.

"I'll go and tell Alma the news before she reads it in the papers," cried Bert, as they drove away. "Make her put it in writing, every word of it, Marion. And make her do it quick—before she has a relapse! It would be a shame if this bath in the North River wouldn't make her honest for ten minutes!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE WEDDING.

Twenty-four hours after this scene on the pier, a happy company was assembled in Dollie's pretty parlor. In that short space of time the little flat had been transformed into a perfect garden, and an exquisite wedding bell of lilies hung in an appropriate position.

Alma Allyn's marriage was to be celebrated at last, and the guests who had been present at the interrupted ceremony were now all talking at once in the cozy parlor.

"It is so sweet of Dollie to let me be married here," said Alma, as she stood in the very center of the group, clad in her bridal garments. "Really, I could not think of a church wedding now! I believe I would have stayed an old maid rather than go through another such a scene as that of yesterday."

"I don't blame you, Alma! It was awful!" chimed in Flora Villard, "but it is too sweet for anything here! I do like a home wedding. But why in the world doesn't Marion come? It isn't like her to keep a wedding waiting."

"Here she is!" cried Bert, as Marion and Dr. Brookes entered. "And here's the dominie, too, so now we are all hunky!"

"Yes, here I am, Alma!" called Marion, gayly, "and in just a second I'll be ready to do my part, but first I must tell you the news of Gladys. She has sent her love to you and Henry and begs your forgiveness and adds that she sincerely hopes that your married life will be happy." There was a moment's silence, in which the tears sprang to Alma's eyes.

"Poor Gladys! Where is she now?" she asked, in a whisper.

"She is still in the hospital, but she will be out to-morrow," was Marion's cheerful answer, "and then she is going into a sanitarium and, in a year, I predict that she will be cured of her drinking! It must be, Alma, so please don't look so hopeless."

She kissed the bride as she spoke and then hurried into Dollie's bedroom to don her bridesmaid's costume and make ready for the service.

"There is something that I must explain, Mr. MacPherson," said Mr. Fairfax, turning toward the clergyman. "Yesterday, when Gladys made her accusation in the church, I did not stop to do much thinking, but later, when she insisted on her story, I had a fearful experience. It suddenly occurred to me that she might mean my brother, Homer, who is a bit of a scapegrace and—well, you can imagine, perhaps, how it upset me for a time. It might almost as well have been me who was guilty as my brother."

The clergyman looked at him questioningly, but the others had heard the sequel, so they only smiled as Fairfax finished his explanation.

"Yes, I was awfully rattled. I could not think for a minute. Honestly, I would hardly have blamed my friends if they had thought me guilty," he added.

"Well, you did strain our loyalty a little," laughed Bert; "why, when you began to look white around the gills, my heart went down into my bootheels, but, thank fortune, our doubts were not of very long duration!"

"No, my sister's retraction has settled all that," said Alma, quickly. "Gladys says the whole story was a lie trumped up for the occasion, but I did not need her statement to make me trust him!"

"Your faith was superb," cried Dollie, enthusiastically. "Really, I think Alma and Marion are two of the sweetest girls in creation."

"And we all agree with you," exclaimed Bert, eagerly; then he turned with a sly look and nudged the doctor.

"How do you feel on that subject, old man?" he asked, "but here comes Marion now, so, of course, you can't answer."

"Oh, yes, I can," laughed Dr. Brookes, with a proud glance at his loved one. "I assure you, I envy Fairfax from the bottom of my soul, but it rests with Marion to fill my cup of happiness! If I had my way, this would be a double wedding."

"Oh, do! do! Marion!" urged Alma, pavidly.

It would be too sweet for anything," chimed in Dollie, eagerly.

Marion's cheeks grew crimson, but she shook her head smilingly, then pointed her

finger at the clock that was ticking on the mantel.

"One at a time, please," she said, with a gay laugh. "See, it lacks but five minutes of the time set for Alma's wedding. We must not delay a second. Is every one ready?"

"All ready," called Bert, who had constituted himself master of ceremonies. "Just go out in the library, all of you bridesmaids and ushers, and then, when you come in, you will find the minister and Fairfax waiting. There won't be so much style as there was in the church yesterday, but this sort of a wedding is ever so much jollier."

"I guess Bert is right. What do you think, Marion?" whispered the doctor, in her ear. "When we marry we'll be strictly informal; will that suit you, sweetheart?"

Marion glanced up and gave him a radiant smile, but the bridal party was forming, so there was no time to answer. A half an hour later Alma and her lover were husband and wife, and, as they stood receiving the heartfelt congratulations of their friends, Marion found an opportunity to answer the doctor's question.

"I don't think formality matters much," she said, in a whisper. "I want every one to be happy at my wedding, Reginald. It would be dreadful to be lonesome upon such an occasion."

She smiled at him archly, and the doctor pressed her hand tenderly.

"I shall share your happiness forever, my darling," he said, tenderly. "but I shall not share your sorrows, for you are not to have any."

Marion glanced at him again. How strong and noble he looked. She could not resist the temptation of returning the pressure upon her fingers.

"Dear Alma! I don't envy her her happiness any more," she whispered, "for I, too, am wonderfully, supremely happy and it is all because I have learned to love."

"May you never regret having learned," was her lover's answer, then both were forced to join the happy group which surrounded the newly married couple. Thus, in spite of a frightful interruption, Alma was

safely married, and Gladys kept her pledge to Marion and entered a sanitarium.

The lawyer had been completely deceived by her, so there was nothing to be done to him, and the fellow Barnes disappeared altogether.

To Marion, her friend's marriage had been almost an epoch, for she realized that it was the sight of Alma's happiness that had awakened her own heart, and now she was looking forward to a rose-hued future.

That anything could ever happen to mar her perfect happiness did not occur to her now, for she was reveling in the sweet delights of love's fair morning.

THE END.

Next week's MY QUEEN, No. 29, will contain "A Lover's Quarrel; or, Marion Marlowe's Deceitful Friend," in which Bert Jackson's strange behavior is followed by a series of startling adventures in which Marion figures prominently.

PATTERN COLUMN.

By special arrangements with the manufacturers we are enabled to supply the readers of MY QUEEN with the patterns of all garments described or illustrated in this column at TEN CENTS each. Address, "Pattern Column," MY QUEEN, 238 William Street, New York City.

In ordering patterns be sure to give size and number.

FASHION NOTES.

Eton coats of silk are to be popular this spring. They are generally tailor-made in effect, but corded or stitched for decoration.

White grounds predominate in the new spring shirtings, and stripes are more delicate and dainty than formerly. Figures prevail in French percale shirtings.

A very stylish pattern in half-hose shows lace openwork between the stripes, which are single or in groups, and in one or two colors. Neutral shades are the most popular.

A low-crowned sailor hat made of taffeta silk or velvet, and trimmed with a bunch of roses or pompons at one side, is considered the chic head-gear for young women to wear in the morning.

It is predicted that separate skirts of taffeta, elaborately trimmed, will be extremely fashionable. The favored style will be a flared flounce, ornamented with lace, ribbon or velvet ruchings and ruffles.

The summer shirt-waists already displayed in the wholesale stores show dainty muslins, batistes and mulls in the pretty pale colors. One feature of their decoration is an applique embroidery of flowers and leaves in the same material, a shade deeper in color, and sometimes combined with white.

The latest convenience for the woman with pocketless gowns is the glove handkerchief. It is a square of the sheerest linen, with a dainty lace edge and is easily tucked into the palm of the hand through the wrist opening of the glove.

How far early predictions in fashion can be relied upon is a question, but the one which all women will wish to believe, is that skirts close fitting around the hips and flaring around the feet, are not to be ousted from favor by any plaits or gathers.

A hosiery novelty of the spring is the ribbon stripe. The body color is black with a zigzag stripe of blue, lavender, pink or red running from foot to top. The allover lace effects and embroidered lace insteps will be seen in black as well as in all popular colors, and in both lisle thread and silk.

No. 2432—LADY'S CLOTH WAIST.

Brown cloth and guipure lace is a pretty combination for this

waist. A very stylish effect would be obtained by a dainty pattern outlined in gold braid on a panne velvet vest in place of the lace; or if the lace is used, outline the design with gold thread. The waist may be developed in cloth, light weight wool novelties, poplin, Henrietta or taffeta. The pattern is cut in sizes 32 to 40 inches bust measure. Size 36 requires 1 5-8 yards of 42-inch material, with 7-8 yard of all-over and 3-8 yard of velvet.



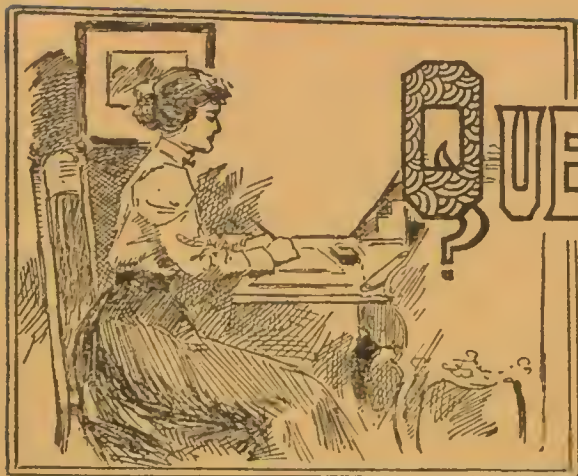
No. 2433—LADY'S BOX COAT.

For riding and driving there is no garment so appropriate and convenient as the box coat.

It is also used for the street, with both fancy and tailor suits. Tan beaver cloth is shown in this illustration. The coat is in medium length in the square box effect. Covert, cheviot, melton, camel's hair and other soft thick cloths are suitable for this style of coat.

The pattern is cut in sizes 32, 36 and 40 inches bust measure. Size 36 requires two and five-eighths yards of 42-inch or one and seven-eighths yards of 54-inch material.





QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY
GRACE SHIRLEY

NOTE.—This department is a special feature of this publication, and it will be appreciated, we feel sure, by all our readers. It is conducted by Miss Shirley, whose remarkable ability to answer all questions, no matter how delicate the import, is well known. Readers of "MY QUEEN" need not hesitate to write her on any subject. Miss Shirley will have their interests at heart and will never refuse her assistance or sympathy. As all letters are answered only through the columns of "MY QUEEN," it is unnecessary to enclose stamps.

So many letters are being received by Miss Shirley requiring answers in this department that we shall have to ask our correspondents to limit their letters to 200 words, in order that all may be answered. STREET & SMITH.

Having read your papers and seen your column of "Questions Answered," we (two boy friends) thought we would write you and ask your advice, as you seem to have given it so willingly to others. The trouble is we both love the same girl, but we do not know which one the girl loves, as she continually puts us both off. We are eighteen and nineteen years old, respectively, and are both very well to do. Now, we both want to marry this girl and each one is willing to give her up for the other. Now, please, tell us what to do.

G—, Miss.

D. V.
H. B.

Since the young lady treats you both with indifference, we do not see that you have reason to think that she loves either one of you. You are both too young to think of marriage, and we would advise you to give up all thought of winning this girl's love for at least a few years. By that time it is probable that you will not both be in love with the same girl. No young man should marry until he has finished his education and become established in business so that he can provide his wife with a comfortable home.

I have been a constant reader of "My Queen" series and think Marlon is one of the best girls that I have ever read about. I wish that I could be like her, but I suppose that will never be, as I am what they call too stiff with the young men. A young man whom I have known for a long time asked me to go to several places of amusement, but I declined, as I did not care for him at that time. I led him to believe that I was engaged. When we meet on the street he just speaks and passes by. I think that I could love him now, for I know that he loves me. How am I to let him know that I am not engaged?

M. C. D.

Being "too stiff with the men" is not a bad fault. When the right man comes along, we do not imagine that he will find you too stiff. We do not understand why you should give a man the impression that you are engaged when you were not. The only way for you to correct the false impression you gave is to tell him the facts frankly but delicately. You could then ask the gentleman to call upon you some special evening, which would give you an excellent opportunity to straighten out matters.

I have a husband who has the drinking habit. He is always in a gloom. I have been married eighteen years and have left him twice, because of this habit, but it didn't do any good. I am forty-one years old, and we have no children. Whenever I talk to him of his drinking he gets angry. Will you please advise me how I can induce him to stop drinking and stay at home with me?

Mrs. C. L.
Minneapolis, Minn.

The drinking habit, when it has become thoroughly established, is one of the hardest to cure. Perhaps you can appeal to his affection for you and so induce him to give it up. If he thinks more of

his liquor than he does of you, we would not think that you would be anxious to return to him after you had once separated.

Perhaps you can persuade him to take one of the courses of medical treatment which are sometimes quite successful with inebriates. It is very fortunate that you have no children to inherit this vice, and for that at least you may be thankful.

I have seen thirty summers and am handsome, but never cared for any one until three years ago, and then I fell in love with a fellow ten years younger than myself, and he with me. We have tried not to love one another, but it is impossible. Do you think it wise for me to marry him? I know I shall never care for any one else. Do you think he would always care for me? Please tell me what to do.

E—, Mo.

HITTIE B.

You are confronted by a very serious problem. It is a doubtful experiment to marry a man so much younger than yourself. The marriage might turn out very happily, indeed, but the chances are against it.

I am desperately in love with a charming, dark-eyed lady about my height, but during the Christmas holidays she was seen kissing a young fellow as she was leaving a country place where she had been visiting. Would you give her up if you were I or overlook the misdemeanor?

ROY S.

Are you sure that it was a misdemeanor? Perhaps, the young lady had a perfect right to kiss the gentleman. We advise you to be sure of this before you condemn her. We should like very much to hear the young lady's side of the story.

Perhaps you will aid me in one of the most momentous questions of my life. I am only a plain country girl of twenty and lately came to this city to earn my living, and have met just the loveliest man. He is so handsome and I love him so much that I think I would die if anything should separate us. He has never told me that he loved me, but the other evening he kissed me and tried to hug me. I would not let him, but it nearly broke my heart to have to repulse him. Was I right in not letting him do as he wanted to? Should I let him see that I care for him before he tells me that he loves me, or shall I take that for granted? Would he want to kiss me if he did not love me? I am afraid that I will do something that will seem unmaidenly to him, and then I am afraid that I will drive him away by my coldness.

Buffalo, N. Y.

RUEDA L.

We do not think you need to fear driving the young man away by coldness. On the contrary, we have no doubt that it will make him think more of you. There is no harm in a friendly kiss, but we do not advise any girl to be too free with her kisses. Perhaps a little more waiting will achieve the de-

sired end. The young man is apparently upon the verge of confessing his affection. No, it is not a sign of love because a man wishes to kiss you.

I have a girl who insists upon reclining on the lounge with me, and when I ask her not to she gets angry and stays away for a week. I would like to have your advice upon what to do about it.
Brooklyn, N. Y. ANXIOUS.

As you seem to be a very sensible young man, we advise you to shun the acquaintance of all young women whose habits are such as you describe in your letter.

I have read every issue of "My Queen" and I would like to know if the letter which I am writing will be answered by you. Do you really receive all these letters from girls? Do you think these girls have all their senses or are they insane? Perhaps there is an asylum where you receive the girls who write such letters.
San Francisco, Cal. LYGIE.

All letters received by Grace Shirley are answered, and yours is certainly deserving of our attention. Yes, we really do receive these letters, scores of them every week, and we answer them with all the interest and sympathy possible. There are hundreds of young girls who are looking for advice, and whether their woes are sensible or foolish, they appeal to one who, like the editor of "My Queen," is deeply interested in their welfare. Remember, Lygie, that "It takes all sorts of people to make a world," and real sympathy is as broad as humanity. There are no griefs so trifling that we would not relieve them if we could.

I have received the attentions of a young man at my house every two weeks for five months, and he says he loves me and that he loved me at first sight. He asked me if I loved him and I told him, "As well as any one I had ever met." He says there is only one true way in which to prove that I love him, and that he knows I do not love him because I will not consent to his way of thinking. I do love him, Miss Shirley, but do you think he loves me? I promise, Miss Shirley, that I will do nothing wrong, and I am sure God will help me. I am only eighteen. He objects because I will not let him kiss me as often as he likes, but I think he will appreciate what few he gets more than he would if I were to let him have his way. He is twenty-five. Ought he not to know whether he loves me or not?
L—, Wis. Miss B.

We are very much afraid that you are wasting your affections upon a young man who is far from being an honorable gentleman. No man who truly loves you will endeavor to lead you into the paths of temptations, but, on the contrary, he will protect you against himself, if need be. This young man's argument is not a new one and we implore you not to heed it, for it has been the downfall of many a young woman. If he wishes to prove your love he has only to ask you to marry him.

Please help me as you have helped others. I have a mother who goes in the best society in town, but on different occasions she has gone with men for midnight strolls, and receives letters from them saying to meet them at different places. Would you not call such a woman a "sport?" I am still young and would like to have company, as mother does, but as our social rank would prevent me from doing so, I know she would not allow me to do so. I do not want to confront her with what she does. Won't you please advise me?
K—, Ill. L. M.

Your letter has shocked us almost beyond expression, as we can hardly imagine a young girl calling her mother a "sport" and at the same time expressing a desire to do as she does. If your mother does wrong, it should be an example to you, and you should exert every effort to try and reform her.

I am a man of twenty-two years and have been married for three months. Everything went nicely for about six weeks, and then I began to notice that when I would come home supper would not be ready

and the house was untidy. My wife would look as though she had just come home, and her hat and coat would be lying on a chair. The other night I thought I would surprise her, and I came in the back door and put my hands over her eyes before she saw me. She said, "Now stop, Charlie; Frank will soon be home." I was so surprised that I asked her what she was saying, and she looked around at me and gasped out that she was only fooling. I do not think she is a true wife, but I wish you would please advise me what to do.
Chicago, Ill. FRANK.

Do not judge your wife too hastily, as appearances are often deceitful. Talk to her kindly and ask her to be perfectly honest with you and, when you have won her confidence, you will have restored peace to your home. The happiness of a lifetime depends upon your using judgment and discretion in this matter, so do not act hastily or in temper, but reflect well upon the situation. If she is doing wrong, kindness alone will force her to admit it. To be ill-natured will only make her more cautious.

I am an orphan boy, sixteen years old, and have no friends to turn to for advice, unless it be to you. I work in an office and make \$10 per week and manage to save \$6 for the rainy day. I am very fond of a little country girl just my age, and learned to love her dearly. Being too young to marry, I told her we had better wait a year or two. She at once got angry and started to keep company with another fellow older than I. He talked about her and made his boasts to other boys of what he could do and did do and ruined her name. I heard about what he had said about her, and I met him one night and gave him a good whipping. Now she wants to make up with me. Her father and mother like me and receive me kindly at their home. I hate to give her up, as she is the only real friend I ever had. What would you advise?
B—, Ind. ROBERT.

Your "little country girl," as you call her, is entirely too young to be responsible for her actions, and she is also too young to know anything of loving. We are surprised that her parents should allow her to have lovers, and cannot understand them standing by while you act as her champion. You certainly are manly and we wish the girl was a little more sensible for your sake, for then she would appreciate the fact that you were both too young to marry. Why not wait a year or two before you show her any more attention? Perhaps, by that time, her nature will have developed. Meanwhile, a good boy friend will be a more fitting associate for you.

I am a girl of sixteen and am in love with a young man of twenty-three. I went with him about six months, but then was not allowed to go with him, so I met him at the corner. The only objection I have to him is that he always wants to be hugging and kissing me when we go out together to any lonely place. He tells me he loves me and he has won my heart. My parents say they will punish me if I do not give him up. Please tell me what to do.
Altoona, Pa. V. W.

The sooner you obey your parents the better. Girls of sixteen often allow boys to hug and kiss them when they are alone together and apt to make a great deal of trouble for themselves, if they continue such practices. You are entirely too young to be having lovers. Some day when you wish a true love and husband your reputation will be gone and no one will care for you. Obey your parents and let this lover go! A man of twenty-three should be in better business than meeting girls of sixteen on the corner and hugging them in lonely places.

I am a young girl of sixteen and have a lover of eighteen. My parents are very wealthy, and as I am the only child, I have everything I wish. They object to my going with my lover, as they have a young physician in view for me, but I have no love for him, for I have given all my love to George. My parents wish me to spend the winter with relatives in New York, hoping I will forget George. Please advise me whether to give up George and marry the physician or to disobey my parents' wish.
B—, Ohio. LORNA W.

My advice to you, Lorna, is to put lovers out of your head, for the present, and see if you cannot learn to write a neat letter. If your parents would do a little planning to educate you before they marry you off it would be to their credit. We do not believe in marriages without love and neither do we believe in matchmaking parents, who yearn to sell their daughters to the most desirable bidder. If you take Grace Shirley's advice you will go to school for two or three years, so that when you do marry you will be a wife to be proud of.

I was married three months ago to a man of nineteen, and I, myself, am only sixteen and a half years old. My husband used to tell me he loved me and could not live without me, and I believed everything he told me and married without my parents' consent. He treated me very kindly for about a month, but since then he has beaten me and called me names. I have been thinking of getting a divorce and leaving him. I hate to do it, but love seems a very foolish thing to me lately. Please advise me so I can know what to do. Mrs. F. M. New Bedford, Mass.

Your pathetic letter distresses me greatly. It is the same old story—a thoughtless, foolish marriage, which, before the honeymoon is over, has begun reaping its bitter harvest. We can only say to you as we have said to scores of others in your plight, be kind and gentle with your husband and try to appeal to his heart, if he has one. If all your efforts prove fruitless and he still continues to abuse you, by all means leave him; at least, for a time. Perhaps that is all that is needed to reawaken his old love for you.

I am very much in love with a charming young lady. We both attend a business college and are together a great part of the time. We are quite young and have not known each other a great while, therefore I have never confessed my love for her. Although she appears to return my affection and shows preference for my company in a number of ways, I am not sure she loves me in the way I would most appreciate. Would you advise me to plead my cause now or wait until we become better acquainted?

L—, Maine.

LOYAL A.

We would advise you to complete your education and allow this young lady to complete hers before you talk to her about love. It is of the utmost importance that you both become equipped for the battle of life before you think of anything else. A few years spent in study will benefit both of you and, during this time, you will become better acquainted with the young lady and more sure of her sentiments toward you, as well as of your own toward her.

I have read all the issues of "My Queen" and like them very much, so I take the liberty of asking you a question. I am a young girl of sixteen and like a young man of seventeen years of age. I meet him at dances and many other places, but have never gone out with him. He knows so many girls he does not pay much attention to me. Would you please tell me how to gain him for a lover?

Chicago, Ill.

E. P. G.

Since the young man has not shown you any attention and has so many other acquaintances who occupy his time, we would not advise you to endeavor to gain his love. Save your affection for the man who will really desire it and appreciate it and do not waste it where it is not wanted. You are young enough to be able to afford to wait a few years before you spend much time thinking of lovers or love affairs.

You may think it very strange that a man of forty-nine would come to you for advice. I have been married three times and have nine children, three of whom are married. I am very much in love with a lady of twenty-one. She is very handsome and I think she loves me, although she has never

told me so. Some of my friends say it would be a disgrace for me to marry her, so I have come to you for advice.

W—, Ind.

W. C. H.

We do not think that any man of your age ought to ask a woman twenty years younger than himself to assume the responsibilities of being step-mother to nine children. This girl is entitled to a much pleasanter future than the one you can give her, and you show small regard for her happiness when you selfishly consider making her your wife. We presume that your friends are about right in their criticism.

We are three chums and are calling on three sisters. The eldest one of us is in love with the youngest sister, and the youngest one of us is in love with the same girl. The oldest sister thinks more of the middle one of us than she does of the oldest. Please give us your advice. We all six think "My Queen" is the only weekly on the market.

Chicago, Ill.

THREE CHUMS.

We are very glad to read your words of high praise for "My Queen." Love seldom runs in the channels dictated by age or other conditions. Cupid is a very uncertain young man, indeed, and plays strange pranks. It is unfortunate that two of you should have set your hearts on the same girl; but, perhaps, even this difficulty will be remedied in time. The best advice we can give you is not to be in haste to become seriously attached to these three girls. It is possible that they may become acquainted with three other men whom they will prefer to you. Let your muddled love affair work out its own salvation. Time is a great adjuster and will probably prove to be one in your case.

Having been a constant reader of "My Queen" and seeing your answers to the young ladies' questions, I thought you would answer one for a young man.

I am twenty years old and, as I was skating I met a young lady, whom I got acquainted with, and with whom I would like to keep company. But she seems indifferent.

What could I do to gain her confidence? I think the world of her and would be happy with her.

O—, Neb.

E. H. T.

Ask the young lady to allow you to call upon her at her home. You will then be able to make her acquaintance better, and as she learns to know you she may take an interest in you. There is no one road to win a woman's favor. Be as good a man as you know how to be, be a loyal friend in all cases, do not be afraid to face any trouble or misfortune—in short, be a man. Even if you do possess all the desirable qualities that could be desired, it is possible that this young lady will still prefer some other suitor; but you will, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing that you were at all times worthy of her attention and interest.

I had a very dear friend whom I respected and admired very much, but being told something about him which displeased me, I broke off my friendship. Afterward I found that the report which I had heard was entirely untrue, and I wrote to him and apologized for believing it, and even asked him to call; but he did not come. Do you think it is my duty to do anything more toward reconciliation?

Chicago, Ill.

ESTELLE P.

You have apparently done all you could to regain your friend's esteem. Probably the fact that you were willing to believe the false report in the first place hurt his feelings severely. It is even possible that because you believed it he has not much confidence in your friendship and, therefore, does not care to continue it. Be slow to listen to idle gossip regarding any one whom you know. If you do hear reports derogatory to their character, the only proper way—and that dictated by true friendship—is to go to them direct and ask them to frankly tell you the truth.

Is there anything wrong in kissing a young man before you are engaged to him? N. O. G. Terre Haute, Ind.

We do not believe in young women being careless with their caresses. An occasional friendly kiss is not especially objectionable, but it should be understood to be a favor that may be withdrawn at any time, and which is bestowed as a token of friendship. Young women, as a rule, should keep their caresses for their husbands or fiancés and never bestow them where they are not appreciated.

In the city in which I live there is a girl with whom I am deeply in love. I am only seventeen and she is fourteen, but I love her with as pure a love as any one person can have for another. Do you think there would be any harm in my kissing her, provided she would let me, for if there is I will refrain from doing so, for I wish her to be as pure as any girl is capable of being. As Miss Marlowe allowed Dr. Brookes to kiss her, I do not see what harm there could be in kissing a girl whom I have loved for five years. ONE SINCERE. A—, Ala.

Kissing in itself is a very simple matter and, among young people of innocent natures, it may be indulged in moderately without danger. We doubt if your kiss would harm this girl, but, of course, we do not know how she feels on the subject. As you are both too young to think of anything more than a boy and girl affection, perhaps it will be just as well to refrain from oscular demonstrations.

I am a young girl and have a great many admirers, but care for only one of them, and he has suddenly turned to being very cool toward me. He knows that I care a great deal about him and that I try hard not to show it. What shall I do to win him back on the friendly terms we were on once? A friend of mine wrote you a letter signed "Blanche C." Please tell me why it was never answered. N—, Mass. YEKLA.

Do you know the reason that the young man has grown cold? If you do you can probably win him back by straightening out the trouble, if there is any. If there was no reason, perhaps he found that he did not care for you after all. If this is the case, of course you would have too much respect for yourself to desire to try to reclaim him. You will find "Blanche C.'s" letter with our answer, in No. 23 of "My Queen." If there was any delay in the publication of it, you must remember that it takes a little time to prepare matter for the printer's hands and to print the enormous edition of "My Queen," and this causes some delay in answering the interesting letters we receive.

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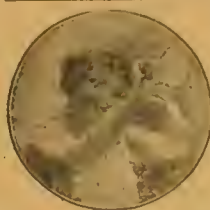


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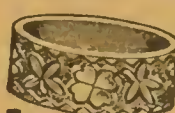
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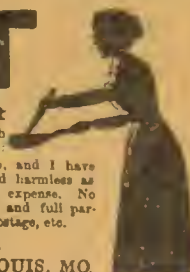
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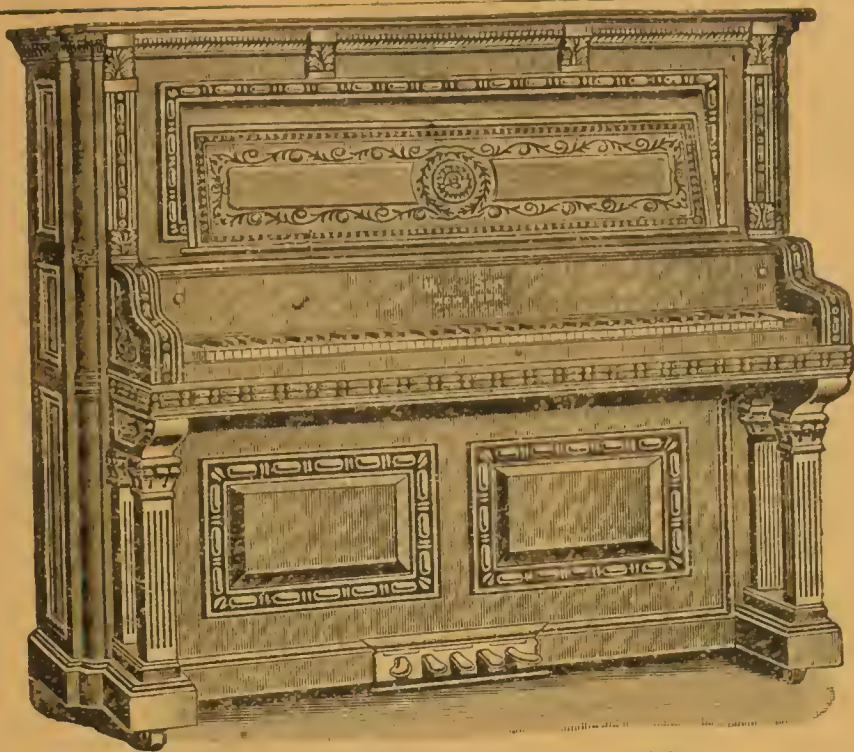
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[PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL PERMISSION.]

LIMA, IND., Jan. 8, 1899.
DEAR MRS. PINKHAM: I have read so much about your great kindness to suffering women that I thought I would write and tell you of my troubles. In the first place, I have a blood disease which the doctors call dry eczema. I have taken a great deal of medicine but received no permanent benefit, so thought I would try your medicine. Menses are irregular, and I am troubled with leucorrhœa. Bowels are constipated; sometimes have sharp pains; cannot sleep at night; have such shaking spells I cannot be still. Suffer with pain in lower part of back, in my side under left breast, and through my chest; also troubled with shortness of breath and dizziness. Please give me your advice.

MISS MARY MECUM.

LIMA, IND., July 5, 1899.
DEAR MRS. PINKHAM: When I wrote to you some time ago I was feeling very miserable. I followed the advice you gave me, and must say that I think your remedies are the greatest remedies on earth. I took both **Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound** and **Blood Purifier**, and they have done me more good than anything I ever took. I cannot express my thankfulness to you, and I shall always recommend your medicine to others.

MISS MARY MECUM.

Mrs. Pinkham's address is Lynn, Mass. She advises women free. Miss Della M. Hittle has given permission to print her two letters, showing how easy it is to get the right help.

MILTON, IND., March 3, 1899.
DEAR MRS. PINKHAM: I have noticed your advertisement and feel that your medicine will do me some good. I have been suffering several months with womb trouble. The womb swells and it feels as if something was gathering on each side. Some days I can hardly be on my feet at all. It makes me very nervous, and I also have a discharge of leucorrhœa. I am getting tired of suffering so much and want to try your medicine. Please advise me and answer as soon as possible.

MISS DELLA M. HITTLE.

MILTON, IND., Nov. 8, 1899.
DEAR MRS. PINKHAM: Words cannot express my gratitude for the good I have derived from the use of your remedies. I suffered with congestion of the ovaries and inflammation of the womb. I was completely run down and my condition was very serious. After reading of the good your medicine had done for others I concluded to write to you for advice. Upon receiving your reply I took a course of your medicine and am now well. The **Lydia E. Pinkham Vegetable Compound** also cured me of the awful headaches I was subject to. I shall never be without your medicine. I cheerfully recommend it to all and firmly believe it capable of curing any female sickness.

MISS DELLA M. HITTLE.

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